



БИБЛИОТЕКА ИНОСТРАННОЙ ЛИТЕРАТУРЫ

# THIS IS AMERICA

## STORIES

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## ПРЕДИСЛОВИЕ

Мы живем в годы великих исторических побед лагеря мира, социализма и демократии.

Но чем значительнее успехи демократического лагеря, возглавляемого Советским Союзом, тем яростнее становится сопротивление лагеря империалистического, во главе которого стоят Соединенные Штаты Америки. Империалистические круги США стремятся к завоеванию мирового господства, к развязыванию новой мировой войны, к разгрому сил демократии. Разбойничья война против свободолюбивого корейского народа, развязанная американскими империалистами — лишь первый шаг в выполнении этих преступных замыслов.

Империалистическая буржуазия США, одержимая бредовой идеей господства над всем миром, стремится обеспечить тылы в подготовке новых агрессивных войн. Она превращает Америку в концентрационный лагерь, пытается разгромить прогрессивное движение и его боевой авангард — коммунистическую партию. Принятый еще в 1947 г. закон Тафта-Хартли лишил американских рабочих прав, завоеванных многолетней борьбой. Гнусный процесс против лидеров компартии, сопровождаемый массовой травлей коммунистов по всей стране, закон Маккарэна-Килгора о фактическом запрещении коммунистической партии, заключение в тюрьму лучших представителей американского народа, беззаветных борцов за мир, — все это указывает на то, что американский империализм встал на путь фашизации США. Господствующие классы старательно уничтожают последние остатки буржуазной «демократии», сохраняя лишь ее видимость в целях обмана трудящихся, и открыто переходят к террористическим методам сохранения своей диктатуры.



В Соединенных Штатах усиливается раскол на две группировки — «империалистическую, которая шумит сейчас на авансцене, и демократическую, за которой будущее».<sup>1</sup> С каждым днем ширится движение борьбы за мир, зреет протест против агрессивной войны в Корее, против всей преступной деятельности поджигателей войны. Несмотря на преследования, все активнее становится борьба коммунистической партии США, ставшей во главе общенародного движения за мир против американского фашизма.

«Коммунистическая партия США, несмотря на преследования и судебно-полицейскую расправу с руководителями партии, смело и решительно выступает в защиту мира, против интервенции в Корее и всей разбойничьей политики американского империализма. Веди борьбу за это великое и правое дело, она тем самым защищает подлинные интересы американского народа», — писала «Правда».<sup>2</sup>

Современная американская действительность обуславливает и характер американской литературы, в которой также определялись два лагеря.

Реакционная литература прилагает все усилия, чтобы исказить реальную жизнь Америки. Никогда еще за всю историю буржуазной литературы прямой подкуп, растление писателей не достигали таких размеров, как в Америке наших дней. Никогда еще не заходил так далеко кризис, упадок, маразм буржуазной литературы. Поставщики мистики и порнографии, детективов и империалистических агиток, послушно выполняя приказ хозяев, пытаются отравить сознание американского народа.

В борьбе с продажной реакционной литературой растет и крепнет прогрессивная литература современной Америки. Эта литература стремится к правдивому, реалистическому отображению действительности, к разоблачению фашизирующей Америки, к изображению сил, сопротивляющихся американскому фашизму.

В настоящей сборнике собраны рассказы и отрывки из романов американских писателей, рисующие Америку последних лет. Прогрессивная литература США, отражаю-

<sup>1</sup> Молотов. Доклад о 30-й годовщине Великой Октябрьской социалистической революции.

<sup>2</sup> «Правда», 30 июля 1950 г.

щая широкую оппозицию народа Америки американскому империализму, отнюдь не является единым потоком, что не могло не отразиться в данном сборнике. В нем представлены писатели самых различных направлений — от недавно умершего Томаса Вульфа, творчество которого находилось под сильным влиянием буржуазного декаданса, — до пламенного борца с империалистической реакцией, коммуниста Говарда Фаста. Здесь помещены первые рассказы начинающих авторов (Борден Дил, Беатрисы Гриффит, и др.) и рассказ крупнейшего представителя американского реализма Теодора Драйзера. Весьма неровен, конечно, состав сборника и с точки зрения литературного мастерства представленных писателей. Однако все рассказы сборника объединены одним, — в каждом из них в той или иной мере отражена правда о современной Америке.

\* \* \*

В первом разделе сборника показана Америка бесправия и угнетения, та Америка, которая все более явно превращается в фашистское государство.

Неизменный спутник фашизма — человеконенавистническая идеология расизма — нынешним цветом распустилась в США. Американские эсэсовцы «тренируются» прежде всего на неграх. Не случайно и в данном сборнике тема чудовищной дискриминации негров занимает немалое место (рассказы «Унижение» — "Humiliation", «Вам понятно?» — "Understand What I Mean?").

Травле в «цивилизованной» Америке подвергаются не только негры, но и представители других национальностей. Рассказ Беатрисы Гриффит «С течением времени» ("In the Flow of Time") рассказывает о мексиканском погроме в Лос-Анжелесе в 1943 г. Два молодых мексиканца, уходящих на другой день в армию сражаться против фашизма, с горечью и гневом наблюдают за погромщиками. Один из них говорит: «Слушай, это же не Лос-Анжелос, это Германия. Ведь такое только в Германии может быть. Неужели мы воюем за это?» — спрашивает он дальше.

Тысячи негров, как и представители других национальностей в США сражались в рядах американской армии в надежде на новую, лучшую жизнь. Они нашли по воз-

вращения Америки, которая все больше напоминает гитлеровскую Германию. Рассказ «Вам понятно?» отражает горькое разочарование вернувшихся фронтовиков-негров.

Однако, в рассказах о расовой дискриминации, правдиво рисующих жизнь угнетенных национальностей в США, весьма слабо звучит тема организованной борьбы против империализма.

Исключение в этом отношении составляет образ негра коммуниста Джо Рэя в романе Фаста «Кларктон» ("Clarkton"), где автор рисует процесс перерастания чувства горечи, гнева и ненависти к белым, в ясное понимание *классового характера* дискриминации; он показывает, как Рэй становится сознательным и мужественным борцом против американского империализма.

Однако, расовая дискриминация — лишь одно из проявлений американского фашизма. Угнетенные национальности испытывают на себе двойной гнет. Но и так называемые «стопроцентные американцы», вся огромная масса американских трудящихся, создавая огромные материальные ценности, отнюдь не чувствует себя хозяевами своей судьбы, своей жизни. Америка все в большей степени становится страной, где люди подозревают друг друга, охвачены неуверенностью и страхом.

В сборнике помещен рассказ Драйзера «Западня» ("Will You Walk into My Parlor"), написанный еще до Октябрьской революции. Разумеется, те методы шантажа, которые в рассказе Драйзера применяются по отношению к журналисту Грегори, пытавшемуся раскрыть преступные махинации лозьев города, в сегодняшней Америке выглядят несколько наивно. Достаточно сравнить эти методы хотя бы с практикуемыми ныне приемами выяснения «лояльности» (рассказ «Лояльность мисс Ферч» — "Loyal Miss Ferch"), — а ведь это всего лишь один маленький эпизод общего процесса превращения Америки в полицейское государство. Однако, реалист Драйзер уже в рассказе «Западня» прозорливо подметил историческую тенденцию, полностью развившуюся в наши дни; поэтому рассказ и сейчас сохраняет свою ценность. В художественном отношении рассказ Драйзера — один из лучших в сборнике.

Следует однако отметить, что тема фашизации Америки еще не нашла достаточно глубокого и широкого отражения в литературе. •

Стремление США к мировому господству, империалистическая политика Америки в Европе и Азии проявляется и в поведении американских империалистов за границей. Эта тема составляет второй раздел сборника, где помещены отрывки из романа «Крестоносцы» ("The Crusaders") прогрессивного американского писателя Гейма, активного участника движения борьбы за мир, и рассказ молодого негритянского писателя Карла Оффорда.

Стефан Гейм в романе «Крестоносцы» изображает борьбу двух сил в американской армии в конце второй мировой войны. С одной стороны — это наемники империализма, воюющие за интересы большого бизнеса, ничем не отличающиеся от немецких фашистов ни по своим целям, ни по своему моральному облику, — генерал Фаринг, подполковник Уиллоби, капитан Люмис и другие. Им противостоят честные американцы, искренне верившие в то, что вторая мировая война — это поход демократии против фашизма, искренне желающие действительного искоренения фашизма. К их числу в романе Гейма принадлежат лейтенант Иетс, капитан Трой и другие.

Уиллоби был до войны младшим партнером крупной адвокатской фирмы. Он вступает в соглашение с представителем правления французского металлургического концерна белоэмигрантом Березкиным, а затем, уже по окончании войны, пытается прикарманить часть акций концерна Риптселса. Иетс, преодолевая многочисленные трудности, раскрывает махинации Уиллоби; происходящая между ними борьба наглядно иллюстрирует столкновение двух сил в американской армии.

Уиллоби считает, что американцы в Европе будут строить «порядок, возможно более похожий на то, что мы имеем у себя». Для этого необходимо сотрудничать с европейскими капиталистами, даже если они и были коллаборационистами. Иетсу, говорящему об идеалах свободы и демократии, Уиллоби отвечает: «Демократия, Иетс, это исключительно вопрос формы. Нам важно другое: кто будет

контролировать заводы Делакура — Яков Березкин, который понимает толк и в производстве и в управлении, или какойнибудь комитет из представителей низов...»

Американские империалисты уже во время войны делали все возможное, чтобы на командных постах в странах Европы были люди, с равной готовностью отдающие свою родину на растерзание как немецким фашистам, так и их американским пресемникам. Особенно выразительна в этом отношении сцена собрания торговой палаты, где произносит речь генерал Фаринг. «Знай свое место!», говорит он немцам. «Знай свое место!», — так называется заключительная часть романа. «Знай свое место!» — так приказывает Уолл-стрит маршализованной Европе.

С большой реалистической силой показывает Гейм отвратительный облик реакционной американской военной машины. Гейм рисует целую галерею спекулянтов, насильников, грабителей в мундирах американской армии.

Гейм выступает как борец против американского империализма. Однако он не до конца раскрывает социальную основу и характер антиимпериалистического лагеря, недооценивает историческую роль великих побед советского народа и Советской Армии в борьбе против фашизма, побед, обусловивших разгром фашизма и решительный перелом сил в послевоенном мире в пользу демократии и социализма. Следует отметить и то, что образы представителей второй Америки, борцов против империализма, недостаточно ярки и убедительны в изображении Гейма.

Во включенном в сборник отрывке показан самый ранний этап послевоенной политики американцев в Германии, выразительно называемой «репатрификацией». В наши дни приемы, наглядно показанные Геймом, находят достойное продолжение в деятельности боннского марионеточного правительства, развале экономики Западной Германии, оживлении фашистских организаций, воссоздании германской армии. Оберштурмфюрерам вроде Петтингера ныне уже совершенно открыто покровительствуют американские хозяева.

Рассказ Карла Оффорда изображает хозяйничанье американских империалистов в Азии. «Знай свое место!» —

эти слова могут быть эпиграфом и к этому рассказу, показывающему столкновение американского солдата-захватчика с местным жителем.

Голливудские фильмы, радио, махрово-реакционные еженедельники типа «Лайф», продажные американские газеты пытаются внушить всему миру миф об «американском рае».

Этот миф беспощадно разоблачается в рассказах третьего раздела сборника, где перед читателем встает подлинная Америка. Это Америка жгучих противоречий между сытыми и голодными, страна безжалостной эксплуатации трудящихся, каторга для рабочего люда.

Человек, уже шесть лет не имеющий работы, дошедший до полнейшей нищеты и отчаяния, безмерно счастлив, когда получает место водителя машины, перевозящей нитроглицерин, хотя эта работа и грозит ему верной гибелью. (А. Малыш «Самый счастливый человек на земле» — «The Happiest Man on Earth»). Рассказ этот написан в 30-х годах, но он не только не устарел, но звучит сегодня с новой силой.

За один только 1946 год 16 500 американских рабочих погибли и свыше 2 миллионов получили увечье в результате несчастных случаев на производстве, из-за отсутствия элементарной техники безопасности.<sup>1</sup>

В сборнике даны живые иллюстрации к этим цифрам. В одном из лучших своих рассказов «Человек на дороге» («Man on a Road») Альберт Малыш рисует трагический образ рабочего, заболевшего по вине хозяев тяжелой неизлечимой болезнью легких — силикозом; обреченный на смерть, он бродит по дорогам Америки, покинув свой дом, чтобы не оказаться тяжелым бременем для семьи. «Вылечиться от этой болезни нельзя, и доктор говорит, если бы компания выдала нам маски и наладила вентиляцию, ничего бы такого не было», с горечью пишет герой рассказа в прощальном письме к жене.

При погрузке парохода погибает грузчик Тимми (Уильям Гриффин «Ты в Америке, Тимми» — «You Are in Amer-

ica, Timmy"), американец ирландского происхождения, поверивший рассказам об американском рае и нашедший преждевременную смерть в результате «несчастливого случая» по вине тех, на кого он работал.

Трагедию американских батраков, которых сгоняют с земли, рисует Борден Дил в рассказе «Бездомные» («Exodus»).

Полюсу труда и нищеты противостоит другой полюс — горстка «обнаглевших, захлебывающихся в грязи и в роскоши миллиардеров» (Ленин).

Яркий, выразительный образ компании, «коммерческой империи» дает Томас Вульф в рассказе «Компания» («The Company»).

Божество, которому поклоняются служители компании — бизнес — превращает Мэррита в отвратительный, бездушный автомат. «Компания должна получить эти свои 30%. Ты нам их выжмешь или — выматывайся сейчас же со всеми потрохами. Попятно? Компании нет дела до тебя. Нас интересует только бизнес!» — кричит он на подвластного ему служащего компании. Здесь раскрывается бесчеловечный облик американского бизнесмена, сбросившего маску цивилизованности и напускного дружелюбия в момент, когда дело касается его прибылей.

Следует, однако, сказать, что прогрессивные американские писатели еще очень мало показали в своих произведениях типичных представителей правящего класса США, злейших врагов народов всего мира.

Тяжелая жизнь трудящихся Америки наших дней вызывает у них естественный протест. Но еще очень, очень многие американцы не знают истинных путей борьбы за лучшую жизнь. Это отразилось и во многих из публикуемых рассказов.

Элементы протеста есть уже в рассказах «Человек на дороге», «Бездомные», «Они приходят в движение» («The Grasshopper Is Stirring») и др.

Эти рассказы вызывают гнев и ненависть. Однако они в основном рассказывают о жертвах империалистической Америки, а не о борцах против нее. Кто же виноват в бедствиях народа, как бороться с этими бедствиями, кто будет бороться — этого не знают герои.

Под влиянием усиления борьбы классов в самой Америке и обострения борьбы двух лагерей во всем ми-

ре революционизируется и сознание американского народа.

В предлагаемом сборнике есть и произведения, призывающие к борьбе, показывающие опыт этой борьбы. Эта тема составляет четвертый, заключительный раздел сборника.

В нем помещены образцы публицистики, рисующие деятельность коммунистической партии США. Это очерк Боносского о Гэс Холле и письмо Грина, опубликованные в центральном органе американской прогрессивной литературы — журнале «Мэссес энд Мейнстрим».

Американская прогрессивная публицистика имеет славную традицию; и сегодня в творчестве Фаста, в журнале «Мэссес энд Мейнстрим» очерк, памфлет стоят на передовой линии борьбы. В очерке, самом оперативном литературном жанре, прежде всего находит свое отражение реальная действительность со всеми ее противоречиями, предстает благородный облик лучших людей сегодняшней Америки — коммунистов.

Есть в американской литературе последних лет художественные произведения, показывающие элементы того нового, что зарождается в действительности, показывающие Америку в борьбе.

Речь идет о романе Говарда Фаста «Кларктон» и повести Мак Генри и Майерса «Моряк на родине» («Home Is the Sailor»).

Мак Генри и Майерс много лет участвуют в рабочем движении США. Они пришли в литературу из многочисленного отряда рабочих корреспондентов, которых вырашивает коммунистическая печать США. Показ борьбы американских трудящихся в их первой повести настолько правдив, актуален, настолько важен, что с лихвой окупает недостатки, вызванные литературной неопытностью молодых авторов.

Действие романа разворачивается в тридцатые годы — годы экономического кризиса. Авторы показывают невыносимо тяжелую жизнь моряков, их постепенное пробуждение, переход к сознательной борьбе. Сцены романа, рисующие борьбу масс против профбюрократов, полностью сохраняют свою актуальность и в наши дни. Сегодня рядовые члены профсоюза, все более убеждаясь в предательской роли своих лидеров, поднимаются против своих реакционных руководителей.



Весьма важен образ главного героя повести Билли Фэррела. В начале романа это рядовой американский моряк; политический кругозор его чрезвычайно ограничен. Он с недоверием относится к коммунистам, считая, что коммунисты «слишком много занимаются чужими делами». Билли ищет города, «где бы народ не голодал», но разворачивающаяся у него на глазах борьба за улучшение условий жизни, борьба, которой самоотверженно руководят коммунисты, помогает Фэррелу понять, что такого города не существует в капиталистическом мире, что надо бороться за изменение жизни в самой Америке.

Фэррел вступает в коммунистическую партию. В процессе борьбы раскрываются и лучшие стороны натуры Фэррела, он духовно обогащается, круг его интересов становится шире.

Преобразование рядового рабочего в борца против империалистической реакции — такова основная тема повести.

В сборнике помещены также отрывки из романа Фаста «Кларктон». Имя Говарда Фаста — члена Всемирного Совета Мира — уже хорошо известно советскому читателю. В процессе острой политической борьбы, активным участником которой он является, Фаст приходит ко все более глубокому и правдивому отражению современной американской действительности.

Роман «Кларктон» написан в 1947 году. В период работы над «Кларктоном» Фаст читал «Мать» Горького (новое американское издание этого романа с предисловием Фаста вышло одновременно с «Кларктоном»). Опыт великого основоположника социалистического реализма помог Фасту в изображении процесса превращения рядового человека в борца за справедливость.

К «Кларктону» Фаст пришел вооруженный большим опытом работы над историческим романом. Фаста интересует в истории прежде всего тема роли народных масс, тема исторической неизбежности победы народа, несмотря на все временные поражения.

Роман Фаста рассказывает о четырех днях в жизни маленького городка Кларктона, о забастовке на единственном в городке крупном заводе. Владелец завода Лоуэлл получил в 1944 г. 2 миллиона долларов чистой прибыли. Но удовлетворить справедливые требования рабочих о по-

вышении зарплаты он не желает. Действие романа происходит в 1945 году. В этом году по статистическим данным в США было 4616 стачек, в которых приняло участие 3,4 миллиона человек. За этими сухими цифрами стоят живые люди, человеческие трагедии, столкновения, острая борьба. Об этих живых людях и рассказывает Фаст в своем романе.

Роман Фаста не свободен от недостатков. Особенно серьезные возражения вызывает образ владельца завода Лоуэлла, которому автор уделяет непомерно много внимания, слишком копаясь в его внутренних переживаниях, подробнейшим образом описывая его моральную деградацию. Вместе с тем в образе Лоуэлла не нашли отражения типичные, основные черты представителя правящего класса США послевоенного периода.

Но недостатки романа Фаста не могут затемнить основной его ценности, как одного из первых художественных произведений прогрессивной американской литературы, в котором даются образы отважных борцов против империалистической Америки — коммунистов.

Пафос романа Фаста, его главный смысл заключается в нарисованной им картине деятельности компартии, в реалистических образах коммунистов. В городе Кларктоне всего 43 коммуниста, но они тесно связаны со всей массой рабочих, ведут ее за собой. Организаторы стачки в Кларктоне — коренные жители города, коренные американцы. Коммунизм не импортируется в Америку «иностранными агентами», как клеветнически утверждают американские фашисты, он рождается в самой Америке, в каждом ее городе, на каждой фабрике, в процессе борьбы труда и капитала. Эту мысль Фаст воплотил в своем романе в художественных образах. Коммунисты Кларктона — обычные люди и в то же время это настоящие герои. Прав партийный организатор Кларктона, рабочий Денни Райан, говоря, что коммунисты — лучшие люди Америки.

Сорок три коммуниста Кларктона — люди различных профессий, разного культурного уровня, разные индивидуальности.

Больше всего удался автору образ Денни Райана, простого рабочего. Убежденность Райана в правоте того дела, которому он посвятил жизнь, ощущается и в разго-

воре со священником, и в сложном столкновении с профсоюзным руководителем Носка, оно же помогает ему перенести полицейские пытки и выйти победителем из этого испытания.

Кульминационным пунктом романа является сцена массового пикетирования завода. Благодаря хорошей организации забастовки, даже применение полицией оружия не напугало рабочих. Этот массовый пикет показал рабочим всю силу объединения и организованности.

Роман Фаста — одно из лучших произведений послевоенной литературы США.

Ценность романов Фаста, Мак Генри и Майерса заключается прежде всего в том, что они дают реалистическую картину Америки сегодняшнего дня, показывают в своих героях черты человечности, стремления к счастью и беззаветной преданности делу освобождения человечества.

Прогрессивная литература США является неотъемлемой частью общей борьбы народа Америки против империализма. Весь государственный аппарат США приведен в действие, чтобы уничтожить прогрессивную литературу. Подкуп, поощрение ренегатства, прямые угрозы, судебные преследования, запугивание, травля в прессе, заключение в тюрьму — все средства применяются для того, чтобы заставить замолчать тех, кто всем своим талантом, опытом и знаниями служит народу. Но все эти попытки бесплодны. Прогрессивные писатели США уже внесли ценный вклад в общее дело борьбы против американского империализма. За прогрессивными писателями США — будущее американской литературы, так же как за мужественными борцами их книг — будущее американского народа.

*Р. Орлов*

## CONTENTS

### I

<i>Beatrice Griffith</i>	
IN THE FLOW OF TIME . . . . .	19
<i>Bill Gerry</i>	
UNDERSTAND WHAT I MEAN? . . . . .	31
<i>C. Hall Thompson</i>	
HUMILIATION . . . . .	42
<i>Langston Hughes</i>	
NOT WITHOUT LAUGHTER (Excerpt from the Novel) . . .	51
<i>Theodore Dreiser</i>	
WILL YOU WALK INTO MY PARLOR . . . . .	55
<i>Sam Elkin</i>	
THE WAY THINGS ARE . . . . .	112
<i>Alan Max</i>	
LOYAL MISS FERCH . . . . .	129
<i>Mike Quin</i>	
THE SACRED THING . . . . .	137
<i>Mike Quin</i>	
OSCAR WANTS TO KNOW . . . . .	140
<i>William DeMille</i>	
RUTHLESS . . . . .	143
<i>Rube Goldberg</i>	
ART FOR HEART'S SAKE . . . . .	147

## II

*Stefan Heym*

KNOW YOUR PLACE (Excerpt from the Novel "The Crusaders") . . . . . 155

*Carl Offord*

THE GREEN GREEN GRASS AND A GUN . . . . . 216

## III

*Albert Maltz*

MAN ON A ROAD . . . . . 225

*Albert Maltz*

THE HAPPIEST MAN ON EARTH . . . . . 235

*William J. Griffin*

YOU ARE IN AMERICA, TIMMY . . . . . 247

*Thomas Wolfe*

THE COMPANY . . . . . 255

*Borden Deal*

EXODUS . . . . . 267

*Ben Field*

THE GRASSHOPPER IS STIRRING . . . . . 282

## IV

*Howard Fast*

CLARKTON (Excerpts from the Novel) . . . . . 293

*Beth McHenry and Frederick W. Myers*

A UNION IS BORN (Excerpts from the Novel "Home is the Sailor") . . . . . 340

*Phillip Bonosky*

ONE OF THE TWELVE . . . . . 387

*Gil Green*

AN AESOPIAN LETTER . . . . . 397

Примечания к тексту . . . . . 404

I



*Beatrice Griffith*

## IN THE FLOW OF TIME

*"Homes invaded in hunt for pachucos<sup>1</sup>  
outbreak flares anew."*

.

We rode the red car back to Los Angeles, but before we got to the station we knew there was trouble downtown—big trouble. It wasn't like Friday and Saturday nights when the sailors invaded our parts of town and tried to mop up on the zootsuiters, and any other Mexican guys they see. This was worse. The people on the streetcar were talking and reading the papers about the riots. Kids selling papers on the corners were yelling in the windows about the sailor-zootsuit war, not about the real war. The lady in front of us got off at Vermont Avenue, and Mingo grabbed the paper she left. WEB OF ZOOTSUIT GANGS SPREADS OVER ENTIRE L. A.<sup>2</sup> AREA—that was the headline in the Herald paper in his hands. There was a lot of talk, too, about the Major and police getting tough with the zootsuit gangsters. Mingo looked at me.

"That means us, I guess, don't it? We're wearin' drapes,<sup>3</sup> and we're Mexicans. Hiya gangster!"

Early this morning Mingo and me took the streetcar out to San Fernando Valley, hopped the bus, and soon we were on the little dusty road going up the hill to my grand-



father's farm. We both wore our drapes 'cause it was the last day before the Army, and we were going to a party at my house tonight. Out there in the country the zootsuit riots were far far away, like a dream you dream in jail. I remembered times before, coming here, when the hills was yellow with poppies and butterflies, and you'd see the humming birds dive bomb deep into the hearts of the wild tobacco blossoms. This morning was soft and warm, full of sun and sage smells, with all the little bug noises you hear when you stand still in the middle of a field going over the hills in summer. We'd never be forgiven if we didn't enjoy green earth and the radiance on it. Tomorrow we both cut out down that rain track for some Army camp, and then it will be that in this war the full adventure of living has started. So this day we go hunting in the hills by Canoga Park.

My grandfather and lots of Mexicans live there in the country where there is hunting in the low hills. Us kids always used to go out there from Maravilla to hunt for rabbits; my grandfather taught me that when I was real little. We would go from the shack in town where there was not much food and out into the brown hills, where the rabbits were like God's little animals—many and lots. Sometimes the summer morning was white and still and lonely, all quiet with no sun, and the San Francisco train would come in whistling, whistling, way off over the river. Then these little rabbits would fly like bullets across the dark ground, and we would eat for a week.

My grandfather I tell you is a man. That's what he is, a real man. You know, sometimes Mexicans are more old in California than Americans. My great-grandfather came here to California in the days of the gold rush to mine gold, a Yaqui from Sonora, Mexico. But he didn't get rich mining gold. My grandfather used to drive a six-mule team up with the dawn in the wheat fields. Up at four, home at nine. And now, with seventy-six years of living he works fourteen hours a day and reads with no glasses. Once every six months he comes to Los Angeles to watch the people rushing here.

and there on the streets. Then he goes back to his little farm, happy like a chicken in a big hole of loose dirt. The city is not for him. But his fields of alfalfa,<sup>6</sup> and squash,<sup>7</sup> with the little garden and lemon trees by the house, with the cows in the barn—there is he happy.

At the house my grandfather was out in the alfalfa. But my grandmother gave us long long drinks of cold milk, then some tortillas<sup>8</sup> and beans for lunch. From behind the door we got the two guns we used to hunt with when we was kids, and with Pancho, the old dog, we were gone, cutting over the back hills.

Mingo was happy, man. He was a little borrachito,<sup>9</sup> he was happy 'cause he had patched up his quarrel with his chick.<sup>10</sup> We walked down the dry riverbed, broke through some brush and trees into another field. Mingo asked me, "Think the paratroopers will take us? We'd look pretty sharp in those Army zootsuits."

I tell him, "Sure they'll take us. Why, heck, when we've got to think things out, we're okay. It's the book knowledge we haven't got. But I know I could lead my men in and out of danger because I've been in so much myself. I've had a lot of experience in running away from the enemy, in being smarter—whether it was hunger or jail or just life."

Mingo stopped quiet for a minute, then aimed slow at a little rabbit sitting on top a rock looking at the world. He shot his 22,<sup>11</sup> and that little rabbit flew clear in the air, turned a somersault, came down, and started running fast the other way. He shot again and got it. "Baby, that's a sweet one," he yelled and ran over to it with the dog barking ahead of him. We walked along some more without seeing rabbits for some minutes. Then he asked me, "Danny, why don't you marry Jessie? You know she's crazy for you."

I told him, "I'm crazy for her, too, but she's got big ideas. I want my kids to have a mother with a good education like her. She speaks English real smooth, not like in my days when I learn English words because they worry me until I know what they mean, and read books, and books to learn

English. But Jessie is poor. Her family's got big ideas for her to marry, and I'm not one of 'em. I tell her to run away and we'll go to Arizona to marry. And after the war I'll own my own trucks and make money. But no go. Last night I tell her, 'Jessie, love is like a big game of checkers, to get anywhere you have to make a big move.' But she just looks cute and says she don't know how to play checkers! Like heck she don't."

We walked along, far over the hot hills in the windy sunshine and shot three more rabbits, running rabbits, the strong ones. Then after some more time we sat under a big oak tree and talked the talk you think and not say out loud—the talk you give your dog and sometimes your friend. While we are eating beans and tortillas, Mingo lies down looking up at the blue sky for a long time. Then he is up quick and on his feet. With a tortilla in one hand he puts both up to the sky and shouts, "All I want, God, is my girl and three sons and to be happy. That's all, God. Hear me, God? Hear me?"

But I tell Mingo that all he hears is that little gas engine for the water pump on the next hill, that's all. God's busy. But Mingo shakes his head at me and smiles his big smile and says, "Last night I give Dora the ring the priest blessed. We'll get married when I come home from the war. I asked God last night and he say, Sure, it's okay by Him. I tell Him every day so He won't forget."

I tell Mingo, "I think that with guys that get married it's like this. As a kid you make up the person in your heart you are going to marry. And always you are hunting, because that person in our heart changes and is never caught. It's like that, whether God hears you or not. You are always hunting for that person in your heart."

Mingo lit him a cigarette and leaned his head against the tree. "Well, my old man wasn't hunting for no person in his heart when he came here to America. He found her in Chihuahua. He was hunting for a country where a man could grow his family in peace and not starve. He came from the fighting country, where every Indian head brought back

to the rich hacendados<sup>12</sup> would give pesos. So, for the living of his life, he come out to California and worked for ten cents an hour, 'cause there was a strike. Me, I think it's like a dog that can't find the right tree, we're all time hunting something—a woman, a job, money, food—something. Every day of our lives we're hunting something."

After some more talking and hunting we come in from walking over the hills. The shadows were long, and black on the earth 'cause the night was settling down, and we drink deep of the air in the night fields. At the house my aunt gave us tortillas fresh from the stove and cool beer. Then we roast a rabbit crisp and brown with juice running from it. My grandfather got him a cigarette and sat by the stove. I know he was just waiting for the night and a fire for all the stories and people in his mind to come alive to his tongue. From inside his shirt he took his St. Christopher medal,<sup>13</sup> the one he carried all his life. It was so old and worn you could hardly see the old Saint on it. He told me, "It will bring you home safe from the war. I don't need it longer." Then he gave it me, and got a tall beer from the icebox.

When he did this my aunt got up from eating and went in the next room to the little Saint in his corner by the piano. She took from there another medal for Mingo. She gives him hers so he can come back and marry that chick, I guess.

And while we sat in the kitchen looking from the door into the hills and trees, life was sweet, man, it was good and sweet for the minute. Then I tell Mingo we better cut out, 'cause there's the long ride back, and the party and the chicks—and the zootsuit trouble in town. So we cut down the dark road going home.

But now, coming back, it was like the people on the streetcar had never seen Mexicans before, the way they looked at us. When we got up to get off, they stared hard at our pants until Mingo tells one of 'em. "Lady, you can buy them at Burton's, fifteen-inch cuff. Just plunk down \$65 and they'll give you the whole suit."

The conductor yelled us to pipe down. We rolled into the subway then and everybody poured out the doors.

We scrambled out of that car and up through the station into Hill Street. It was like the sailors and marines were taking over the whole city. Only now there were soldiers too, yelling, with all the gabachos<sup>14</sup> helping them. They had bottles and belts, clubs and iron pipes in their hands. They were waving them over their heads. We got pushed against the building by the crowd who was looking up the street where there was a lot of shouting and where somebody was getting beaten. The people were filling the streets, packing them from building to building, yelling like they were drunk or crazy. They didn't see us yet 'cause we had on leather coats and they couldn't see our pants in the mob. The air was full of excitement.

Some sailors near us called, "Come on, you Pachucos, you yellow bastards, we'll get you—all of you." The crowd laughed and moved, pushing every way and everybody. They were all trying to get someplace down the street. Then we heard a roar and somebody yelled, "They got 'em, they got 'em. They got those goddamned zootsuitsers." And from the corner in front of the theater a mob of sailors poured out with a couple of kids wearing fingertip<sup>15</sup> coats, pulled along in the middle of them. Those kids were getting it all right, with busted heads and bleeding faces—those kids were getting it. Pretty soon, a black coat was thrown up and got passed around with people catching it and tossing it. Then the pants came and another coat, a tan one. Each time the crowd yelled and packed tighter to the center. The police were standing along the sides holding their night sticks, looking pleased about the whole thing. Or maybe they were gazing at the stars in the sky. They didn't do nothing to stop that mob, nothing. A blonde girl near us jumped and caught the tan coat that went sailing by. She grabbed it; then she squirmed until she got it on. She danced around in a circle yelling, "I'm a Pachuca, I'm a Pachuca." She was laughing and kissing the sailor next her

like she was nuts. Mingo wanted to knock her pink face in, but I grabbed his arm. "There's the alley. We gotta cut out of here."

We pushed on with the crowd until we come to that alley. We was afraid they would see our haircuts in a minute and we'd be dead ducks then, right in the middle of that mob. While we was pushing our way, with people packed tight around us yelling and laughing, and the guys getting beaten in the streets, my heart was beating fast like somebody was giving me a knockout in the ring and I couldn't stop 'em hitting me.

We ran down the alley until we got to the next street. The mob was bigger here, there were thousands of 'em everywhere. Traffic had stopped and the sirens were screaming. Even the ambulances had a hard time pushing through. It looked like the only places where Mexicans was travelling this night was to the jails and hospitals. A yellow streetcar was stopped by a crowd of sailors and marines who got on it yelling "Gangway, here comes the Navy. We're hunting for zootsuits to burn!" They pushed the motorman out of the way, and the conductor scrambled out the back door. The passengers piled into the street, some climbing out the back door. But the Mexican and Negro kids weren't so lucky. There was a big fight inside with the sailors trying to undress the guys and beat them up. The crowd yelled and cheered and stormed around the car. One of the guys, a kid I know from Flats, a good track fellow in Roosevelt High, got pushed out the streetcar window half dressed. His pants were torn off and he had only one sleeve left. Those sailors were crazy. Chuey Ramirez never was a zootsuiter, never wore drapes, and here he was getting beat up like all the others. The people grabbed Chuey, and by the time they got through there he was down in the gutter. I couldn't see him more then, but I could hear the yells and laughing around him.

I thought Mingo was going nuts when he saw this. He was getting madder and madder while we was trying to

work our way through to First Street, where we could catch a car that was still running out to the Eastside. Mingo kept saying over and over, "Hell, man, this is a street in Germany tonight. This isn't Los Angeles. This is a street in Germany." Then he grabbed my arm. "Maybe they're coming to our homes. Let's get out of here quick."

We went the short cuts through those next streets until we came to First and Los Angeles below Main Street, where the fighting was going hard. We caught the car just as the conductor clanged the bell and banged the door shut. Everybody was scared. Mexicans, Negroes, gabachos—everybody was excited and talking. A whole bunch of 'em got off at the big government housing place, and even here you could see sailors to get in the recreation hall where some kids was having a dance inside. Police cars and ambulances with Mexican kids, and some with sailors raced by us. This night the Shore Patrol or MP's<sup>17</sup> almost never caught up with the sailors and soldiers. But the police always came along and mopped up the kids and took 'em to jail. More cars and taxis loaded heavy with sailors and soldiers were moving up First Street. Some had stopped in front of the pool halls and little eating joints and any place else where there was Mexicans. There was trouble everywhere in our part of town. •

By the time the streetcar turned, we didn't see many of the sailors and soldiers. They hadn't come to our territory yet, but the excitement and sounds of sirens had come ahead. Women and girls with little kids in night clothes was standing inside their fences watching up and down the streets.

There was excitement at our house too. Some of the kids had come for the party, and some had already gone to their homes to get weapons. My mother was in the kitchen cooking the big pot of little tamales and making the enchilada sauce.<sup>18</sup> My sister Dora was crying like she couldn't stop, sitting there at the table. She was coming home this night with her boy friend, and the sailors saw them on North Main Street. They ask him, "You a Pachuco?" And

he tell them, heck, no, he was only wearin' semidrapes. But they give it him anyway. They took off his clothes there before her and put his pants on the streetcar tracks. Then they beat him up and the cops came along and threw him in jail for extra. My mother was talking to Dora and cursing the gringos<sup>19</sup> for making trouble. In the other room the kids were sitting around the radio listening to the jive<sup>20</sup> and police calls when they came in. It was like the whole of Los Angeles had busted out with riots: Central, Watts, Dogtown, Flats, Happy Valley, Clanton, Hazard, Marriana, Pecan—all different territories had fights at once. Those sailors and soldiers sure got around the Mexican streets.

Freddie, Chacho, and some more guys came in the back door with stories about the sailors down the block. Freddie said: "They're going in the houses looking everywhere for us guys. They beat up old Jesus Santiago when they saw him sitting on his porch 'cause they said maybe he was the father of a zootsuiter. They knocked him out cold—him with Felix in the South Pacific."

I was glad my girl lived on the other side of town—living over there with the Americans she wouldn't get hurt in this fight—and anyway her skin is lighter, she doesn't look Mexican much.

Pretty soon you hear the sound of breaking bottles and a lot of yells down the street. Ernestina looked out the window and yelled. "Here they come. They're coming in here!" And in that minute in rushes a whole gang of sailors and marines with bottles and belts and sticks.

One little guy, drunk and yelling names, busted into the door and called out, "Any zootsuiters live here?" When he saw us guys and the girls in the room, he stopped a minute. Then he yelled, "Here's a mess of 'em. Come on, guys, come and get 'em." The fight was on. From the door in the kitchen my mother call them in English "You disgrace your uniform—vergüenza—vergüenza—shame—these boys have done you nothing."

But one of the sailors yelled her back. "Ah, dummy up.



If you weren't a lady, we'd do the same to you. These guys raped our wives."

Well, I tell you, that little house was one big explosion. Somebody knocked the lamp by the piano over, and the table in the middle of the room with all our pictures came crashing down with guys on top of it. It was a free-for-all with everybody getting knocked down and getting up again, all the time cursing and swearing and hitting. Rosie and the girls was yelling from the kitchen door, and my mother was crying her tears. Some more fellows came back from outside and piled into the fight to help us out. When the sailors see they are outnumbered, they scam. One of them yelled, "Hay, let's get the hell out of here—Jiin's hurt." Then they picked up a guy sprawled on the floor and dragged him out through the screen door with us guys after them.

Most of the sailors piled into a taxi that was waiting in the street and the others jumped into a roadster behind it. Our kids cut out for their homes to see if anybody was getting hurt there. All up and down the streets people was standing behind their fences crying and cursing, looking past the running sailors and soldiers who were hunting their sons and brothers. The little old Jewish woman next door asked Mingo and me, "Is this a pogrom?" Mingo tell her, "No, it's a revolution, maybe—like in Mexico."

When we come back in the house my mother was picking up the wrecked furniture and still cursing the sailors, crying all the time. Everything was broken. Even the pictures of her wedding was knocked from the wall, and the front of the radio busted in. Dora and Rosie tried to bandage the cut on Mingo's head and stop the blood coming down his face.

•After his head is fixed, we got a couple of bottles of beer out of the icebox and we go and sit on the porch to watch. Mingo tells me, "I am going to Mexico and fight in the airforce. I'll fight with Mexicanos—not with gabachos. Is this what we're fighting for? What Emelio takes his pennies and nickels to school for, to buy a jeep?"<sup>21</sup> Democracy doesn't work at home. Maybe it would be okay for Hitler to

"come here and then these Americans would get it too." He was wild and mad. Nothing you tell Mingo makes any difference this night.

I told him, "Not all Americans is like these guys. These guys got something eating in their guts. Anybody who fights for no'reason got something eating his guts. You gotta go with me in the Army, Mingo. We gotta stick together, Mingo. In the Army it's different with Mexicans."

Mingo was hating deep in his heart, and when anger goes into the heart of a Mexican it stays a long, long time. He looks hard at me. "What happened to you—getting lambie with the gabachos? What's eatin' you, dope? What did any American do for you? Nothing! And tonight they beat us up—beat us up while our guys are overseas fighting. Why should I go sweat my guts out in the Army for this? Maybe you like it. I don't. This land used to belong to the Mexicans. Maybe it will again. Maybe we'll get it back. I'd fight for that. In Europe, if the Germans see more than two people together on the street, they arrest them. Here they beat you up. What's different? This is like a street in Germany tonight. You know it." He flipped his knife into the wooden steps when he talked. Then he reached down and picked it up quick, again.

With every word I was trying to pound into Mingo, I was smashing my fist on that post beside me. "Mingo, when you was up North, my brother brought two guys here to visit when he was home on furlough—two gabachos. They sat right at our table and ate enchiladas and menudo.<sup>22</sup> Right in there at that table they sat and ate with us. Those guys and Alex are like brothers—you know it. He's the only Mexican in his crew flying over Germany, but they're all like brothers. We got their pictures on our table. They're like brothers, I tell you. You gotta listen. You gotta go with me to the station in the morning. You gotta go."

Then he give me a long look. "Oh, so you have to wear a goddamn uniform before you can be a brother to a man, is that it?"

There was nothing more I could tell him. Nothing was right this night. I just kept hitting that post till my fist was sore. But the hurt felt good—it was good, not like the other things I felt in my heart this night.

Suddenly Mingo jerked my hand away. "Save it. You'll need your hand later." He got up. "I gotta go. Maybe I'll meet you in the morning, maybe not. I'm going to take Rosie home and see who got hurt in Dogtown. Then I'll see about wearin' that Army zootsuit, in the paratroopers."

He called Rosie from the house and they went out the gate. I tell him, "Be careful with that knife, Geronimo."

He laughs and takes Rosie's arm. "This is a democracy. I have to defend myself, don't I?"

I sat there a long time on the steps. The people were still on the corners, watching and crying and talking. Standing behind their little fences, they were waiting. Inside my house it was quiet and dark. Old Pedro Ramirez who drives the water wagon came by sprinkling down the night streets. He stopped and called me, "What's the matter, Danny? What's the matter, Danny? What's the matter? What have they done? This is wrong—this is wrong." Old Pedro was worried and kept shaking his head while he drove that crate down the street.

Across the road the house was wide open and the radio banged out some Mexican music. I wondered about Mingo, about Jessie, about me--about all of us. You know, if you take time out to think what it is all about, say take a little retreat into your mind—well, if you do that you know something. You know that in the future, in the flow of time, we have to bring knowledge into the heads of our children, and beauty into their hearts. Then this sickness won't happen. These riots won't occur.

My drink was gone, Mingo was gone, the sailors were gone. It was quiet now. Quiet on our street. But far off downtown the sirens were still coming through the night.

**Bill Gerry**

## UNDERSTAND WHAT I MEAN?

It was all in a barbershop. I had patronized<sup>1</sup> it before the war and now, with my personal war ended, I was patronizing it again. Tucked in between a motor-cycle repair shop and Edie's Lunch, it was quite unchanged, except that, outside, the stripes in the pole were no longer in spiral motion. Maybe the old man was shaving corners as well as necks<sup>2</sup>—I don't know.

Inside, I had noticed on an earlier occasion that one chair, the rear one had been removed, so that the old man was working alone. The remaining chair was bolted into the painted floor right beside the big window, and he didn't bother any more about sweeping up the hair around it after each cutting. Just once or twice a day. That was because of his heart, which had so absorbed his mind with worry that the first thing he said when I entered was, 'Did you get those nitroglycerin tablets for your heart, like I told you?'

He was wearing the same celluloid eye shade, green, and his knee-length white smock, and he had a cigarette with a quarter-inch of ash balanced on the edge of the shelf just behind him. In the chair he had a customer, an army staff sergeant; and the wizened lady was sitting and dreaming like a cat in a lump-cushioned wicker chair next to the rattan table.

I felt slightly diffident and merely nodded. After all, he was pallid and white-haired while my own complexion was still ruddy and my hair a good Number 3 brown, the way my navy I. D. card<sup>3</sup> had described them. It would have been silly to begin comparing symptoms like two neurotic invalids in a rest home.

'Best thing there is when the attacks come,' he went on. 'Fixes me up right now.'

I gave my attention to a battered magazine from a pile of old issues on the table, but he was busy whipping up hot lather with his face to the long wall mirror above his working shelf, and his back was to me. The old lady, evidently his wife, glanced once curiously in my direction and then returned to an uninterrupted gazing out the window towards the traffic.

You could see almost everything pass from here, if you had patience, everything from the shiniest limousine to the dirtiest dented yellow cab; but now the chief flow was one of goods and men more vital than either of these: huge Diesel trucks with bulldog cabs<sup>4</sup> and double trailers,<sup>5</sup> buses and tankers in blue and scarlet respectively, and now and then the flashy white and black of a police prowler car.<sup>6</sup> Once in a longer while you even saw great self-powered landing barges<sup>7</sup> in navy gray go by mounted upon special trailers with broad, stocky wheels. Most common were the motor convoys.<sup>8</sup> army<sup>9</sup> usually—although at one time thirty or more olive-drab jeeps tore past with sailors, in white caps and blue pea-jackets,<sup>10</sup> at the wheels. Whatever these were, men, supplies or guns, or a combination of the three, they always came fast and noisily accompanied by motorized police, to blast a peremptory right of way with their sirens.

By comparison, the barbershop seemed isolated, out of this world. Only the drowsy buzzing of the clippers<sup>11</sup> and the metallic chirping of the old man's thin scissors were there to remind one of insects in a lazy, sunny woodland. Rarely did he turn on his radio.

A siren screamed as I sat thumbing the magazine idly and waiting my turn, and in a moment or two another khaki convoy hurtled by. This time, however, the soldiers sitting in tight rows under the covered-wagon canvas had black faces framed by their steel helmets, and held their rifles with dark, silent hands.

The old man had the sergeant facing the window while he washed remnants of lather from the reddish neck and ears; so I didn't get the impact of the comment until it had struck the glass and rebounded like a news flash within the quiet room.

'More damn niggers!'

The old lady stirred with a faint smile, as if suddenly interested in something as valid as her memories. But the barber continued his methodical swabbing of the tanned, sturdy neck.

'Sure,' he said, pausing briefly to take a drag on his cigarette. 'Lots of 'em go by here. Lots more workin' in the air plants. Where you from?'

'Arkansas.' As the chair pivoted, the soldier was facing me and the woman. But he rolled his eyes back and upward, talking to the barber. 'An' I sure don' think mucha the way they run things out here, either--lettin' niggers sit right next whites in the buses.'

Again the old lady smiled and added a delicate sigh as though attending overtones of some almost forgotten lores<sup>12</sup> of chivalry. But the barber laughed.

'So, that's what's botherin' you! Thought you acted kind of stirred up when you came in.'

The other glowered in sullen appreciation.

'Tellya one thing--' he nodded emphatically at me, although I had not spoken a word--'back where I come from we treat niggers okay, but we damn well keep 'em in their place. None o' this lettin' 'em strut into a bus an' sit down next no white woman.' He shook his head with a frown, as if the matter were still outside his comprehension. 'I pretty

near upped an' floored<sup>13</sup> the one I saw right there an' then. If he'd a sat next me, I sure woulda floored him.'

The barber glanced speculatively at me, ignoring the old woman's approving gleam, and let his scissors talk a moment.

'Can't go tryin' anything like that out here,' he cautioned. 'Get you in trouble fast. Might start a riot.'

The sergeant accepted the hand mirror he offered and studied his reflection critically in the panel of wall glass. He was scowling and shaking his head.

'I know it—but I'd still've floored him, all right.'

Abruptly, maybe because I as yet had not entered the discussion and he felt uncertain of his audience, he became roughly apologetic. 'Guess it's what you've been used to. I sure wasn't brought up to go ridin' 'round with no niggers.'

I tried to focus on my magazine, to close my ears, because the familiar stiffness and pain were coming rapidly again inside my chest, and I didn't dare think aloud. The extraordinary part of it was that I could hear Brownie talking to me again, quietly, soothingly—the way he had talked to my wife once when she lay ill. Brownie was speaking to me again now, affectionately, repeating words he'd said more than a year and a half before in parting.

'Well, so long,' he had said then. 'You take good care of yourself.'

'Hub—we take care of myself! What about you? You're the one.' I flung an arm about his shoulder, walking with him to the glass doors and the patio<sup>14</sup>. It was mid-morning, not quite ten. Even with the fresh odor of GI<sup>15</sup> about him I could smell the particular shaving lotion he was in the habit of using. 'I'm going to miss you like hell, fella.'

We hadn't had a drink, but we both felt the same way—the way we always used to feel after having had a couple cans of beer, when we'd finished carrying mail for the day and were resting in the car and tuning in on the five-thirty race results.

'It really was okay then, at the induction centre?'<sup>16</sup> I

asked again dubiously, wanting to be sure before Brownie left. 'They didn't try to segregate you or anything like that?'

He smiled happily. 'No—nothing like that. It was swell. We ate together, slept in the same barracks, had a drill, and played ball a little. Just like I've always said it could be, understand what I mean? Those who were interested in the same things hung around together. I remember four fat guys in particular, absolutely inseparable—a Mexican, one white, and two colored boys from the Central Avenue district. They liked to sing.'

'And there was no trouble at all?'

'Oh, one of the boys who used to live in Texas said at first he wasn't going to sleep under the same roof with us, but the lieutenant talked to him in front of the whole company and he took it fine. A colored boy I knew from Pasadena was out one morning policing the grounds with me, and he couldn't get over it—thought it must be heaven or something.'

'By god!' The thought exploded inside me with elemental force because it was so tremendous. 'You know, if they'd just let you all keep on training together that way, you wouldn't need guns. You could go out and lick all Hitler's got with your bare hands.'

'I don't know. I guess it will be different from now on in some ways—but I'm going to try hard.' He was radiant. 'I'm going to take everything they want to throw at me.'

'Sure you will, fella—sure you will. You're going to do all right in this VOC<sup>17</sup> deal. Hell, you'll be a captain before you know it.'

'A first lieutenant will be okay.' He squeezed my arm hard. 'Look, I've got to run along and see gran'mumma and some other people. If it had been anybody else, I wouldn't have come by. They only gave us twenty-four hours.'

'You going to write?' I knew he wouldn't, but it didn't matter.

'Sure, I'll write. Just as soon's I get settled wherever it is they want to send me.' He was moving backward



reluctantly, backing down the slope of flagstones and smiling. 'Won't be many able-bodied men around before long. Going to have the women all coming to see you.'

With his glasses sparkling in the sun, he looked rather like my father, almost. His teeth against his dark skin seemed whiter of course, and he still had a thin tight fuzz which spread back from the high receding forehead.

'I'll see you,' he said. 'Somewhere—sometime.'

All the while it felt as though a stout rubber band were stretching between us. But at last he put on his cap and tapped his head in salute. The band strained, and snapped.

That was more than a year and six months ago, and I'd been in service myself since, and also discharged. It seemed strange to be remembering all this again now, while actually sitting in my old barbershop and even in the familiar worn chair—and looking at a uniform instead of being still inside one. Doubly strange was the quick afterthought that this shop had always been on Brownie's mail route, even when the office had taken a street off or added another on—he had told me he was going to get his old job back, the first time we met after our discharge.<sup>18</sup>

At the moment, the barber was wiping bits of hair out of the sergeant's eyes and ears and loosening the black-and-white checkered cloth. The man stepped down, shoving a broad hand into his pocket while the other stood aside, shaking the hairs out of the cloth, and then, with the sheet draped over his arm, turned to the mahogany cash register to ring up the sale. The soldier was young and heavy with muscle, and he had a wide flattish face matching his hands. He walked over to where the hatrack stood, near me, and reached for his cap, adjusting it carefully on his head. He still seemed truculent but full of a necessity for explaining.

'Guess I wouldn't get along out here,' he said. He shrugged for the benefit of the old woman who was old enough to be his grandmother. 'I can't take the way they mix 'em all up together—specially with women folks. Guess it's how you were brought up—what you're used to.'

'Next!'

The barber beckoned to me automatically, although I was the only customer left, indicating that he had no desire to prolong the discussion. I laid the magazine back on the table and went slowly to the chair, stepping into it, and he swung me about so that I was face to face with the sergeant and the old lady. Up to then I hadn't said a word, but suddenly I did.

'You've got something there.' The soldier turned my way in quick surprise. 'It's what you've been used to, all right. I'm from Massachusetts myself.'

He seemed puzzled, perhaps because I was smiling amiably. But the old lady's birdlike eyes pierced me venomously and then fluttered to one side. The sergeant stood waiting. And only the barber kept on about his business, drawing the paper band tight about my throat and pinning the checkered cloth over it.

'When I was training in Texas,' I continued, 'I never got used to the old colored women with bundles or babies who always stood aside in the pouring rains until every last man, young or old, climbed first into a bus. Whenever I urged them to get on ahead of me, they seemed scared.' In memory, I could see all this clearly again, as well as the other things, like the 'For White Only' signs, so that I felt stiff and excited, and the old pain was cutting off my breath.

And then, right then—as if in response to a cue spoken upon a stage—Brownie himself came walking past the plate-glass window, pulled open the screen door and stepped inside the shop. He was back in the slate-blue of his postal uniform and at first had only eyes of pleasure and surprise for me, until by the almost imperceptible twitching of his eyelids I knew he had sensed the lines of force within the oblong room. Still smiling, however, he began thumbing through the letters in his left hand.

'How come you're here?' he asked solemnly. 'There's a regular beauty parlor across the street. Or d'you like a GI cut?'

'Say—you tryin' t'crack wise 'r something?' The soldier, opening the door to leave, swung back.

'Sure he was!' I snapped. 'To me. Mind us being friends?'

The old man shut off his clippers and padded around the chair swiftly.

'Now, boys, take it easy. Don't get started on anything you'll be sorry for.' He moved slightly in front of his wife, the old lady, as if protecting her from what he feared might ensue.

'What's wrong?' Brownie said to me softly. 'You having trouble?'

'Uh-uh. Just trading viewpoints.'<sup>19</sup> The sergeant doesn't like it much around here and I didn't think the South was so hot. He's upset because we don't run Jim Crow<sup>20</sup> buses. But that's okay—it's all in what you've been used to, the way we were saying.' I grinned at the soldier with an effort. 'Look, before you get any ideas, I'll tell you. We've both been in and honorably discharged. Mine's heart trouble, but his—and incidentally he was a sergeant, too—was bus trouble.'

'What's the gag? What d'ya mean, 'bus trouble?'

'Tell him, Brownie.'

Slipping the weight of the mail bag off his shoulder to his knee, Brownie lifted his right foot into place next to mine upon the foot rest of the barber chair. Then he glanced apprehensively at the woman.

'Maybe she'd rather I didn't.' When she did not reply, looking at him without expression as if he didn't exist, he hoisted the bag up. 'Yeah—I think some other time'd be better.'

The sergeant's square face had reddened gradually under its firm tan.

'Naw ya don't! You started something, nigger. Let's hear you finish it.'

Brownie's muscles quivered briefly and he looked hard at me. Then he shrugged and let his bag slip down once more.

'All right,' he said brusquely. 'I'll tell you.' But again his face became silent as if cast into bronze, and I had to kick

his foot to snap him out of it.<sup>21</sup> He blinked and continued. 'I got on a city-bound bus going in from a Southern camp this time, and there was just one seat left—behind the Jim Crow sign, of course. Well, I took it, but there was a lady in the other part of it with a kid in her lap, and I had to stick my feet out in the aisle to make room. That was when the driver leaned around and told me to keep my knees back inside the niggers' section. I tried to explain how it was, but he began to swear and carry on. So I knew I had to get off fast.' He looked earnestly at the sergeant. 'Understand what I mean? I didn't want any trouble. I never want trouble.'

'So he got off because he didn't want to cause trouble,' I repeated. 'But was that the end of it?' I'd heard Brownie tell this before, and it was always the same when he did.

He reached out and gripped my arm momentarily. 'Don't let it get you. I'll tell it.' He smiled warmly in comfort. 'I don't mind. Anything that might help, I don't mind.' Again he faced the waiting silent three. 'No, that wasn't the end of it. I went on walking by myself towards where I wanted to go, but along came a police car the bus driver had hailed, and two cops jumped me.' He nodded at the soldier, patiently, like a teacher endeavoring to explain a fundamental point to a pupil. 'You've been through it—you know what that tough army training does for you. It doesn't make you like having a gun pulled on you, especially for nothing, does it? Understand what I mean? You get to have instinctive reactions. Anyway, when I saw one of them had a gun out, I grabbed it—because I didn't want to get shot.' He moved his head ruefully. 'That's where I made my bad mistake. That other cop he pretty near shot me full of holes.'

Something like a breath of life flushed the woodenness out of the soldier's face. He had been standing red and uncomfortable in the doorway, but he appeared more at ease now. He jerked his head in disgust.

'So what're you squawkin' for? Ya had it comin', didn't ya?'

'Yes, I had it coming.' Brownie looked at me sombrely again. I knew he was remembering the day we'd said our goodbyes, just as I had recalled it earlier. The strong thought of this was still in the room struggling with the newer, uglier echoes. 'I had it coming for ever believing that that uniform in war time made one man as good as the next. I should have known better than to try to act decent.'

'Brownie,' I said quickly. 'Listen, Brownie, he can't help it. He's from South of the Smith and Wesson line.<sup>22</sup> It's what he's been used to.'

Brownie stared at the sergeant. I could see his eyes, hurt and hungry.

'I was proud of that uniform,' he said evenly. 'I wanted to make good in it. Understand what I mean—I was an officer's candidate, a VOC—one of the first four from this town.'

The sergeant kicked at the base of the screen door with the toe of his shoe, opening it and holding it open a moment. His confidence was entirely back, and as immaculate in its cut and press as his freshly cleaned coat and pants.

'Thanks for the sob story,'<sup>23</sup> nigger. Next time you're down our way maybe you'll know better.' He let the door bang sharply behind him and strode away.

The mail bag thumped to the floor but, with the barber's cloth dangling from my neck foolishly, I reached the door ahead of Brownie, backing up against it. I pleaded with him.

'Not again, fella --not this time. Even if you licked him, you couldn't change his mind that way. And the office might can<sup>24</sup> you.'

The woman was half up off her feet and babbling incoherently, but the barber shoved her back down into her chair.

'You shut up!' He approached the door nervously. 'He's right. Better cool off and forget it,' he advised Brownie. To me he held out a tiny white tablet. 'Here—slip this under your tongue. You look pale as the dead.'

Still thinking that Brownie might elbow me aside, I obeyed warily. But I was trying to smile, and I lifted a hand

to Brownie's shoulder. He paused, studying my face, so close that I could make out the red angry veins in his eyes.

'You okay?' he asked anxiously. 'Come on—go sit down again. I'm all right.'

'You should feel sorry for that poor guy,' I said. 'He's young, the world's changing fast—and he's still got to grow up in it.' I said this to him and to the others as well, especially the old woman, trying to erase the most bitter of the past moments.

Brownie didn't say anything as he gathered his letters into his hands and readjusted the strap of the mail bag over his left shoulder. He wasn't as strong as he had been, and it was clearly an effort. Yet turning to me he smiled.

'Thanks,' he said to me. Addressing the old woman, he nodded politely. 'I hope you weren't scared or anything.' She looked past him again, staring at the street outside with a soundless twisting of her faded lips. He patted me briskly on the arm. 'Drop up soon. Got a bottle of good Scotch I've been saving.'

After he had gone, looking at the woman, the empty, eroded<sup>25</sup> face, I said, 'There goes a man—and a friend.' I was talking out loud to myself.

The barber set his electric clippers back on the shelf and with his powdered brush dusted the hairs from my ears and collar. He picked up his scissors and comb. For a while there was only the immediate sharp sound of these, the snipping like a gnashing of tiny teeth set against the dull rushing roar of traffic past the shop.

'Yeah—pretty good nigger, that one,' the old man said at last, with indulgence.

***C. Hall Thompson***

## HUMILIATION

This story expresses realism in America

— in strong language.

One who had escaped from Nazism witnesses  
the American variety and sympathizes with  
the victims.

Katz picked up his coffee cup and blew on the steaming mahogany liquid. He did not look up. Maybe if he just kept his eyes down, the drunk wouldn't take any notice of him. He felt tired and there was a cold numbness in him that turned sick at the false health in the drunk's face. Katz had seen a variety of "stews" during his six years in America, and he had seen the same men for twenty years before in the hofbraus<sup>2</sup> in Munich. He had come to the point where he could subdivide them into definite classes. Out of the corner of his eye, he took in the drunk who sat on the stool next to his.

This one was the conversational type. Katz had known it when the guy first sat next to him at the counter. This one was the kind of drunk who cracked a joke and then looked around him to see how it was going. His clothes were well-made and rakish in style and he wore a slouch hat with a narrow band. Katz tagged him gambler on that basis. There was a false flush in the very clean-shaven face and the eyes were abnormally bright with lids that dropped just a little.

All and all, Katz thought, this was the kind you gave a wide margin.<sup>3</sup>

"What'll it be, Harry?" Paulette said. She shoved a menu in front of the drunk's face and gave Katz a wink. Katz smiled over his coffee, but did not say anything.

"Paulette!" the drunk said. "Little old Paulette. How're they treatin' you, honey...?"

"I can't complain."

"That's right, honey. Can't complain. Ain't no use complainin' ... Hunh?" Paulette was pointing at the menu. "Oh ... I don't know what I want. What you got that's good? How about shrimp? Got any shrimp?"

"Large?" Paulette said. The drunk nodded. "Large shrimp cocktail," the waitress said into the speaker.

"And black coffee, honey," Harry said.

"One black coming up."

Katz took a bite of his liverwurst sandwich and concentrated on the crumbs on his plate. Now that Paulette was gone, he could feel the watery eyes looking at him every once in a while. The drunk cleared his throat and started hunting for a handkerchief. Katz lifted his coffee to sip it; the drunk's elbow jostled his and liquid splashed on the counter.

"... Sorry, pal. ... Clumsy\*as hell, I am. ... Did it burn you? Wouldn't want it to burn you. ..."

"No, I'm all right," Katz said. "It's all right."

Harry looked at him and the heavy lids went up a fraction to indicate surprise. Katz wiped the puddle of coffee up with a napkin and watched the waitresses who took care of the booths, pass back of the counter to get their orders. He thought, now, if I just ignore him, maybe he won't keep it up. ...

"You sure you're not burnt, pal? Wouldn't want you to be burnt. ... " Harry was still at it. "It was a hell of a clumsy thing to do. ... " He paused and regarded Katz, his eyes still a little surprised. "You got an accent," he said.

"A little."



"Shrimp cocktail," Paulette said. Harry waited for it to be set down before him. He took a tender pink shrimp and poked it into his mouth, his eyes drunkenly thoughtful.

"German accent," he said through the shrimp.

Katz ignored it.

"You a refugee, pal?" Harry said.

"Been here six years," Katz said.

"Bet you seen a hell of a lot in Germany, hunh, pal? Bet you seen too much of that guy Hitler. . . . America's the place, pal. You take it from me; born and raised here. Bet you got kicked around plenty over in Germany, pal. . . ."

"I'm a Jew," Katz said simply.

"They treated the Jews lousy," Harry observed, spearing another shrimp. "What the hell right they got to be pushin' people around? Ain't no place to be, Germany. America's the place, pal. Born and raised here. . . . This shrimp's good. . . ."

Katz didn't say any more; he chewed on his sandwich and sipped what was left of his coffee. One of the girls who waited on the booths came back and started filling those tiny individual cream-bottles. She used a funnel that let so much through at a time. Katz got interested in the process. Harry lapsed into a shrimp-chewing, coffee-gulping silence. Only once in a while he would say to nobody in particular, "This's the place, pal. . . ."

"Get that, Anne."

The thin blonde who had been pouring cream looked up at Amelida. The other booth girl had a scowl on her dark-skinned face. Katz watched them both, thinking of the difference in the two. There was something hard and sure about Amelida that contrasted with Anne's easy-going coarse bloneness.

"Get what?" Anne said.

"The coons," Amelida said.

"Where?"

"They just came in. They're sitting in number seven booth."

Katz was listening, now; he had forgotten about the drunk. There seemed to be something interesting to listen to whenever you came to the diner. Anne shrugged.

"What can you do?"

"They're not supposed to come in here," Amelida said. She stared boldly in the direction of booth number seven.

Katz did not want to turn around and look; it seemed too obvious. Then, slowly, he became aware that everyone seemed to be staring at Number Seven. The short-order cook<sup>6</sup> winked at Amelida. Paulette came up and started to fix a napkin holder next to Anne. Katz turned for a moment and looked at the booth. He did not see much. He got a vague impression of a pair of light-skinned colored girls, fairly well-dressed, reading menus. He could feel the other white customers in the booths and at the counter, staring. There was something about it that made him sick.

"What're you going to do?" Paulette said to Anne.

"I don't know," Anne said. "It's Amelida's booth...."

"Well, they can go to hell, if they think I'm going to wait on any coons. Who do they think they are?... This is a white restaurant...."

"You can't keep them out, legally," Katz said, softly.

"I know, but they got a hell of a nerve...."

"You'd think they'd have more sense than to come in," Anne said.

"Did it ever happen before?" Paulette said.

"A couple of times they sat at the counter, here," Anne said.

"I don't remember."

"Wasn't your shift, I guess," Amelida said.

"What'd they do...?"

"Charlie was here. He put pepper in their coffee..

"Was it the same girls?"

"I don't know...."

"They got a hell of a nerve," Amelida said.

"Who's got a hell of a nerve?" Harry said. He looked up from his shrimp and Katz looked away. Paulette grinned.

"The coons," she said.

"Coons?" Harry's voice was loud. He put his coffee cup down so that it rattled against the saucer.

"Sh-h-l!" Anne said.

"Coons?" Harry said again, in a loud whisper.

"Yeah, coons," Paulette said.

"Where?"

"Where you been, chum?" Amelida said. "They come in and sit down in one of my booths and think they're going to get waited on. . . ."

"Coons?" Harry said. "You mean niggers?" He turned around in his seat. He stared at the girls openly. He spun back and almost tipped his own coffee over. "They ain't supposed to be in here."

"You can't keep them out," Katz said.

Amelida stared at him.

"You said that before."

"I just mean. . . . legally. . . ."

"Look," Anne said. "Why don't you wait on them and get rid of them? Everybody's looking at them. They're starting to feel uncomfortable. . . ."

"The hell you say! You wait on them if you want to. I'll be damned if I will. . . ."

"The sooner we get them out of here the better. . . ."

"Well, you wait on them, if you want. . . ."

"You want to get rid of them?" Harry said. He was grinning and a dribbling of coffee ran down his chin. Paulette winked at Amelida.

"This ought to be good," she said.

"No. I ain't kidding you," Harry said. "They ain't got no right to be here. Damn niggers think they own the world. I'll show you how to get rid of them. . . ."

"Maybe I better call Cookie," Anne said.

"You better call the manager," Katz said to her quietly.

"Cookie's the manager. . . ."

"The hell with the manager. You leave it to Harry," the

drunk said. "Old Harry knows how to handle a couple of jigs....' You just leave it to me...."

"He's liable to start trouble," Katz said.

"Let him alone," Amelida said. She was grinning and there was something predatory about the even, small sharp-whiteness of her teeth.

"No rough stuff," Anne said.

Harry winked slowly over his shoulder and walked back along the booths; his stride was unsteady, and he almost passed Number Seven. The colored girls looked up as he paused and came back. The drunk bowed at the waist and clicked his heels. A woman in the end booth tittered nervously. A truck-driver leaned over the counter and whispered something in the ear of the short-order-guy; they both laughed. The colored girls looked at each other. Katz could only see the face of one of them. It was deep tan and well made up.<sup>8</sup> Her lips were heavy but not bulbous. She had an upsweep hairdo<sup>9</sup> and the beaver hat was worth money. The whites of her eyes were prominent and it made her look scared.

"Could I help you chocolate ladies?" Harry said thickly.

The colored girl stared at him, then at her companion. She tried a smile, showing large white teeth, but it fell flat. No one else in the diner was smiling. She concentrated on the menu. The other girl fidgeted and looked out the window. Harry leaned over and took the menu from her hand.

"But, I insist...." He was grinning, but there was no humor in the grin. Katz lowered his eyes and tried to keep out of it. When Harry spoke again, his liquor-voice was hard. "Look, why don't you wise up, mammy? You ain't wanted here, get it? Maybe you better be going to one of your own diners.... Maybe you'd like Uncle Harry to help you...." He had a hand on the girl's arm. She pulled herself loose of his grip.

"Let go of me, white man," she said. "You leave me alone!" There was real fear in her black eyes, now.

"We ain't doing nothing to you," her companion said shrilly.

"I better call Cookie," Anne said.

The woman in the end booth had stopped tittering. Amelida still had the smile plastered on her face, but there was something unsure about it, now. Anne went along the counter, back into the kitchen. The truck-driver kept staring at Harry and a hamburger<sup>10</sup> was burning on the grill, neglected by the short-order guy.

"Come on, nigger," Harry said. "You and your girl-friend better get going. Just because you got a few rights you think you can walk all over us. . . . This is a white restaurant, see. . . . We don't want no jigs eatin' off the plates we use. . . ."

"We ain't doing nothing to you," the girl facing Katz said plaintively. "We just want to eat, that's all. You leave us be, white man. . . ."

"I'll leave you be, all right. . . ."

Harry swayed toward her and took a grip on her shoulder; she winced under the power of his fingers. The truck-driver half rose from his seat. Katz was standing suddenly, walking to where Harry stood. He took the big man and pulled him away.

"Come on away, Mister," he said. "Let them be. . . ."

Harry glared at him.

"Who the hell you tellin' what to do?" he said.

"Let them alone," Katz said. "Sit down and finish your coffee. . . ."

"I'll finish my coffee when I'm damn good and ready. They ain't got no right to be here. Damn niggers think they own us. I'll finish my coffee when they get out. . . ." He pulled away from the grip of Katz's frail hand. He had the colored girl by the wrist again and she let out a little scream. Katz pushed past him and got between them.

"Let them alone, can't you," the little Jew said.

"The hell you say?" Harry's face twisted in a sneer. He raked his eyes over the dinér-crowd. "Get this. Get him telling me to leave them alone!" He laughed. "Get out of the way, or I'll. . . ."

Katz pushed him back a step as he tried to move forward.

"Why don't you cut it out, Mister? That's enough. They'll get out. You don't have to keep it up. . . ."

"What the hell are you? A goddam nigger-lover? That's what it is. . . . He's a nigger-lover. . . a goddam refugee nigger-lover. . . ."

"Shut up," Katz said. "I know what this is. I know how they feel that's all. . . . Just let them be. I know how it is. . . how it was in Germany. They had signs over there. '*No Jews Wanted in This Restaurant*'. . . . It wasn't so nice. . . . Just let people alone. . . ."

"Goddam nigger-lovin' refugee. . . . We give 'im a break and let 'im into this country and what's he do. . . ? Starts trouble. . . ."

"Shut up. . . ."

"I'll shut up when I'm damn good and. . . ."

Harry stepped forward and shoved hard with both hands. The little Jew stumbled in his heavy overshoes.<sup>11</sup> He hit the floor hard. Somebody gave him a hand and he got up, feeling sick and beaten. He saw Anne coming out with the little bald-headed guy they called Cookie. Cookie was asking her why the hell she didn't call him sooner. Katz stepped up to Harry again and took his arm, pulling him away from the colored girls; the two of them cringed against the window away from the "drunk." Harry growled and lost his balance. He fell into the next booth and let out a yowl. He came up with a pie-stained fork in his hand. Somebody screamed and Katz saw the fork coming his way. It ripped down and tore into his cheek. Katz clutched a handkerchief to the wound and stepped back. Two men had the drunk's arms pinned back. Cookie was talking fast, telling them what to do with him. They couldn't calm him down.

"Nigger-lover. . . . Lousy like nigger-lover. . . . We'll get you. . . . You can't come into this country and do what you feel like. . . ."

Cookie gave up trying to do something with Harry. He

came over to where Katz sat on a stool, nursing the four-fingered cut.

"You all right, Mister Katz?" he said.

"It'll be all right," Katz told him.

"You better come back to the kitchen and wash it. I got a first-aid kit back there. . . ."

He led Katz back through the kitchen into a men's room. He helped bathe the nasty wound and put iodine on it. He kept saying he wished somebody had called him sooner. That crazy drunk might have killed somebody. He put adhesive tape over the cut.

"Look, Mister Katz. . . ." Cookie hesitated. "Look. . . if you don't mind. . . . It would be better if you didn't prefer any charges. . . ." I mean a thing like this. . . . police record<sup>1</sup> and everything. . . . It's bad for business. . . ."

"It's all right," Katz said quietly. "Don't worry about it."

"Thanks, Mister Katz."

"It wasn't your fault. It's just that I know how they felt. I had it happen to me. . . ."

"Sure," Cookie said. "Sure. . . . But we got to be careful. . . . We would lose a lot of white customers. . . . You know how it is. . . ."

Katz looked at him for a moment; a soft sigh shuddered through the little Jew's body. It was no use trying to make them understand. He got up after a while and said he better be going. Cookie asked him if he wanted a cup of coffee to warm him up. He said, "No," and went out. There were still a few of the old customers in the diner. They looked at him with a funny, wondering look in their faces. The drunk was gone. He could feel them, in their little minds, thinking of what Harry had said "Nigger-lover." The colored girls had left, too. "Nigger-lover," they were thinking. There was no use trying to make them see how it was. Anelida stared at him when he paid his check; she did not smile. She did not even say good night.

**Langston Hughes**

## NOT WITHOUT LAUGHTER

*(Excerpt from the Novel)*

The old woman took a long draw on her corn-cob pipe, and a fiery red spot glowed in its bowl, while Willie-Mae and Sandy stopped playing and sat down on the porch as she began a tale they all heard at least a dozen times.

"I's told you 'bout it before, ain't I?" asked Sister Johnson.

"Not me," lied Jimboy, who was anxious to keep her going.

"No, you haven't," Harriet assured her.

"Well, it were like this," and the story unwound itself, the preliminary details telling how, as a young freed-girl after the Civil War, Sister Johnson had gone into service for a white planter's family in a Mississippi town near Vicksburg. While attached to this family, she married Tom Johnson, then a field-hand, and raised five children of her own during the years that followed, besides caring for three boys belonging to her white mistress, nursing them at her black breasts and sometimes leaving her own young ones in the cabin to come and stay with her white charges when they were ill. These called her mammy, too, and when they were men and married, she still went to see them and occasionally worked for their families.



"Now, we niggers all lived at the edge o' town in what the whites called Crowville, and most of us owned little houses and farms, and we did right well raisin' cotton and sweet potatoes and all. Now, that's where the trouble started! We was doin' too well, and the white folks said so! But we ain't paid them no 'tention, jest thought they was talkin' fer the pastime of it. . . . Well, we all started fixin' up our houses and paintin' our fences, and Crowville looked kinder decent-like when the white folks begin to 'mark, so's we servants could hear 'em, about niggers livin' in painted houses and dressin' fine like we was somebody! . . . Well, that went on fer some time with the whites 'talkin' and the coloreds doin' better 'n better year by year, sellin' more cotton every day and gittin' nice furniture and buyin' pianers, till by and by a prosp'rous nigger named John Lowdins up and bought one o' these here new automobiles—and that settled it! . . . A white man in town one Sat'day night told John to get out of that damn car 'cause a nigger ain't got no business with a automobile nohow! And John say: 'I ain't gonna git out!' Then the white man, what's been drinkin', jump up on the runnin'-board and bust John in the mouth fer talkin' back to him—he a white man, and Lowdins nothin' but a nigger. 'The very idee!' he say, and hit John in the face six or seven times. Then John drewed his gun! One! two! t'ree! he fire, hit this old red-neck cracker in the shoulder, but he ain't dead! Ain't nothin' meant to kill a cracker what's drunk. But John think he done killed this white man, and so he left him kickin' in the street while he runs that car o' his 'n lickety-split out o' town, goes to Vicksburg, and catches the river boat. . . . Well, sir! That night Crowville's plumb full o' white folks with dogs and guns and lanterns, shoutin' and yellin' and scarin' the wits out o' us coloreds and wakin' us up way late in the night-time lookin' fer John, and they don't find him. . . . Then they say they goin' teach them Crowville niggers a lesson, all of 'em, paintin' they houses and buyin' cars and livin' like white folks, so they comes to our doors and tells us to leave our houses—get the hell out in the fields,

'cause they don't want to kill nobody there this evenin'!. . . Well, sir! Niggers in night-gowns and underwear and shim-mies, half-naked and barefooted, was runnin' ever' which way in the dark, scratchin' up they legs, fallin' on they faces, scared to death! Poor old Pheeny, what ain't moved from her bed with the paralytics fo' six years, they made her daughters carry her out, screamin' and wall-eyed, and set her in the middle o' the cotton-patch. And Brian, what was sleepin' naked, jumps up and grabs his wife's apron and runs like a rabbit with not another blessed thing on! Children squallin' ever'where, and mens a-pleadin' and a' cursin', and wo-mens cryin' 'Lord have Mercy' with the whites of they eyes showin'!. . . Then looked like to me 'bout five hundred white mens took torches and started burnin' with fire ever' last house, and hen-house, and shack, and barn, and privy, and shed, and cow-slant in the place! And all the niggers, when the fire blaze up, was moanin' in the fields, calling on the Lord fer help! And the fire light up the whole country clean back to the woods! You could smell fire, and you could see it red, and taste the smoke, and feel it stingin' your eyes. And you could hear the boards a-fallin' and the glass a-pop-pin', and poor animals roastin' and fryin' and a-tearin' at they halters. And one cow run out, fire all over, with her milk streaming down. And the smoke roll up, the cotton-fields were red . . . and they ain't been no more Crowville after that night. No, sir! The white folks ain't left nothin' fer the niggers, not narrow board standin' one above the other, not even a dog-house. . . . When it were done---nothin' but ashes! . . . The white mens was ever'where with guns, scarin' the poor blacks and keepin' 'em off, and one of 'em say; 'I got good mind to try you-all's hide, see is it bullet proof—giltin' so prosp'rous, paintin' your houses and runnin' over white folks with your damn gasoline buggies! Well, after this you'll damn sight have to bend your backs and work a little! . . . That's what the white man say. . . . But we didn't—not yet! 'Cause ever' last nigger moved from there that Sunday mawnin'. It were right funny to see old folks what

ain't never been out o' the backwoods pickin' up they fee' and goin'. Ma Bailey say: 'The Lord done let me live eighty years in one place, but my next eighty'll be spent in St. Louis.' And started out walkin' with neither bag nor baggage. . . . And me and Tom took Willie-Mae and went to Cairo, and Tom started railroad-workin' with a gang; ther we come on up here, been-five summers ago this August. We ain't had not even a rag o' clothes when we left Crowville—so don't tell me 'bout white folks bein' good, Hager 'cause I knows 'em. . . . They done made us leave our home.'

The old woman knocked her pipe against the edge of the porch, emptying its dead ashes into the yard, and for a moment no one spoke.

*Theodore Dreiser*

## WILL YOU WALK INTO MY PARLOR

It was a sweltering noon in July. Gregory, after several months of meditation on the warning given him by his political friend, during which time nothing to substantiate it had occurred, was making ready to return to the seaside hotel to which his present prosperity entitled him. It was a great affair, the Triton, about sixty minutes from his office, facing the sea and amid the pines and sands of the Island. His wife, 'the girl,' as he conventionally referred to her, had been compelled, in spite of the plot which had been revealed or suggested, owing to the ailing state of their child, to go up to the mountains to her mother for advice and comfort. Owing to the imminence of the fall campaign, however, he could not possibly leave. Week-days and Sundays, and occasionally nights, he was busy ferreting out and substantiating one fact and another in regard to the mismanagement of the city, which was to be used as ammunition a little later on. The mayor and his "ring," as it was called, was to be ousted at all costs. He, Gregory, was certain to be rewarded if that came to pass. In spite of that he was eminently sincere as to the value and even the necessity of what he was doing. The city was being grossly mismanaged. What greater labor than to worm out the details and expose them to the gaze of an abused and irritated citizenship?

But the enemy itself was not helpless. A gentleman in the publishing business of whom he had never even heard called to offer him a position in the Middle West which would take him out of the city for four or five years at the least, and pay him six or seven thousand dollars a year. On his failure to be interested some of his mail began to disappear, and it seemed to him as though divers strange characters were taking a peculiar and undue interest in his movements. Lastly, one of the politicians connected with his own party called to see him at his office.

"You see, Gregory, it's this way," he said after a short preamble, "you have got a line as to what's going on in connection with that South Penyanck land transfer.<sup>1</sup> The Mayor is in on that, but he is absolutely determined that the public is not going to find it out, and so is his partner, Tilney—not until after the election, anyhow. They are prepared to use some pretty rough methods, so look out for yourself. You're fond of your wife, are you? Well, keep her close beside you, and the kid. Don't let them get you away from her, even for a moment, where you shouldn't be. You saw what happened to Crothers two or three years ago, didn't you? He was about to expose that Yellow Point Ferry deal, but of course no one knew anything about that—and then, zip;—all at once he was arrested on an old charge of desertion, an old debt that he had failed to pay was produced and his furniture seized, and his wife was induced to leave him. Don't let them catch you in the same way. If you have any debts bring them to us and let us see what we can do about them. And if you are interested in any other woman, break it off, send her away, get rid of her."

Gregory viewed him with an irritated, half-pitying smile.

"There isn't any other woman," he said simply. Think of his being faithless to "the girl" and the kid—the blue-eyed, pink-toed kid!

"Don't think I'm trying to pry into your affairs," went on the politician. "I'm just telling you. If you need any further advice or help, come to me. But whatever you do, look out

for yourself," and with that he put on his high silk hat and departed.

Gregory stood in the centre of his office after his visitor had gone, and gazed intently at the floor. Certainly, from what he had discovered so far, he could readily believe that the mayor would do just what his friend had said. And as for the mayor's friend, the real estate plunger,<sup>2</sup> it was plain from his whispered history that no tricks or brutalities were beneath him. Another politician had once said in describing him that he would not stop short of murder, but that one would never catch him red-handed or in any other way, and certainly that appeared to be true. He was wealthier, more powerful, than he had ever been, much more so than the mayor.

Since he and his wife had come to this seaside hotel several things had occurred which caused him to think that something might happen, although there was no evidence as yet that his suspicions were well-founded. An unctuous, over-dressed, bejeweled, semi-sporty widow of forty had arrived, a business woman, she indicated herself to be, conducting a highly successful theatrical agency in the great city, and consequently weltering in what one of Gregory's friends was wont to describe as "the sinews of war."<sup>3</sup> She abounded in brown and wine-colored silks, brown slippers and stockings, a wealth of suspiciously lustrous auburn hair. Her car, for she had one, was of respectable reputation. Her skill and willingness to risk at whist-- of good report. She was in the parlance of the hotel clerks and idlers of the Triton veranda, a cheerful and liberal spender. Even while Mrs. Gregory was at Triton Hall, Mrs. Skelton had arrived, making herself comfortable in two rooms and bath on the sea front, and finding familiar friends in the manager and several stalwart idlers who appeared to be brokers and real estate dealers, and who took a respectable interest in golf, tennis, and the Triton Grill. She was unctuous, hearty, optimistic, and neither Gregory nor his wife could help liking her a little. But before leaving, his wife had casually wondered whether

Mrs. Skelton would be one to engage in such a plot. Her friendliness, while possible of any interpretation, was still general enough to be free of suspicion. She might be looking for just such a situation as this, though—to find Gregory alone.

"Do be careful, dear," his wife cautioned. "If you become too doubtful, leave and go to another place. At least that will compel them to provide another set of people." And off she went, fairly serene in her faith in her husband's ability to manage the matter.

Thus, much against his will, at first, Gregory found himself alone. He began to wonder if he should leave or weather it out,<sup>4</sup> as he expressed it to himself. Why should he be driven from the one comfortable hotel on this nearest beach, and that when he most needed it, away from a region where he was regularly encountering most of his political friends, particularly at week-ends? For so near a place it had many advantages: a delightful golf course, several tennis courts, food and rooms reasonably well above complaint, and a refreshing and delightful view of the sea over a broad lawn. Besides it was absolutely necessary for him to be in the nearby city the greater portion of every single working day. His peculiar and pressing investigation demanded it and a comfortable place to rest and recuperate at night was also imperative.

"It's beautiful here," he said to himself finally, "and here is where I stick. I haven't a car, and where is there any other place as convenient? Besides, if they're going to follow me, they're going to follow me."

In consequence, he traveled meditatively back and forth between this place and the city, thinking of what might happen. Becoming a little doubtful, he decided to call on Frank Blount and talk it over with him. Blount was an old newspaper man who had first turned lawyer and then broker. Seemingly clientless the major portion of the time, he still prospered mightily. A lorn bachelor,<sup>5</sup> he had three clubs, several hotels, and a dozen country homes to visit, to say nothing of

a high power car. Just now he was held unduly close to his work, and so was frequenting this coast. He liked golf and tennis, and, incidentally Gregory, whom he wished to see prosper though he could not quite direct him in the proper way. Reaching the city one morning, Gregory betook him to Blount's office, and there laid the whole case before him.

"Now, that's the way it is," he concluded, staring at the pink cheeks and partially bald head of his friend, "and I would like to know what you would do if you were in my place."

Blount gazed thoughtfully out through the high towers of the city to the blue sky beyond, while he drummed with his fingers on the glass top of his desk.

"Well," he replied, after a time, scratching his cheekbone thoughtfully, "I'd stick it out if I were you. If there is to be a woman, and she is attractive, you might have some fun out of it without getting yourself in any trouble. It looks like a sporty summer proposition to me. Of course, you'll have to be on your guard. I'd take out a permit to carry a revolver if I were you. They'll hear of it if they're up to anything, and it won't cheer them any. In the next place, you ought to make out a day-to-day statement of your exact movements, and swear to it before a notary. If they hear of that it won't cheer them any either, and it may make them try to think up something really original."

"Besides," he went on, "I haven't so very much to do evenings and week-ends, and if you want me to I'll just be around most of the time in case of trouble. If we're together they can't turn much of anything without one of us knowing something about it, and then, too, you'll have an eye-witness." He was wondering whether the lady might not be interesting to him also. "I'm over at Sunset point, just beyond you there, and if you want me I'll come over every evening and see how you're making out. If any trick is turned, I'd like to see how it is done," and he smiled in a winsome, helpful manner.



"That's just the thing," echoed Gregory thoughtfully, "I don't want any trick turned. I can't afford it. If anything should happen to me just now I'd never get on my feet again politically, and then there's the wife and kid, and I'm sick of the newspaper business," and he stared out of the window.

"Well, don't be worrying about it," Blount insisted soothingly. "Just be on your guard, and if you have to stay in town late any night, let me know and I'll come and pick you up. Or, if I can't do that, stay in town yourself. Go to one of the big hotels, where you'll feel thoroughly safe."

For several days Gregory, to avoid being a nuisance, returned to the hotel early. Also he secured a permit, and weighted his hip pocket with an unwieldy weapon which he resented, but which he nevertheless kept under his pillow at night. His uncertainty worked on his imagination to such an extent that he began to note suspicious moves on the part of nearly everybody. Any new character about the hotel annoyed him. He felt certain that there was a group of people connected with Mrs. Skellon who were watching him, though he could not prove it, even to himself.

"This is ridiculous," he finally told himself. "I'm acting like a five-year-old in the dark. Who's going to hurt me?" And he wrote laughing letters to his wife about it, and tried to resume his old-time nonchalance.

It wasn't quite possible, however, for not long after that something happened which disturbed him greatly. At least he persuaded himself to that effect, for that was a characteristic of these incidents—their openness to another interpretation than the one might fix on. In spite of Blount's advice, one night about nine he decided to return to Triton Hall, and that without calling his friend to his aid.

"What's the use?" he asked himself. "He'll be thinking I'm the biggest coward ever, and after all, nothing has happened yet, and I doubt whether they'd go that far, anyhow." He consoled himself with the idea that perhaps humanity was better than he thought.

But just the same, as he left the train at Triton and saw it glimmering away over the meadows eastward, he felt a little uncertain as to his wisdom in this matter. Triton Station was a lonely one at nearly all times save in the morning and around seven at night, and to-night it seemed especially so. Only he alighted from the train. Most people went to and fro in their cars by another road. Why should he not have done as Blount had suggested, he now asked himself as he surveyed the flat country about;—called him to his aid, or stayed in the city? After all, hiring a car would not have been much better either, as Blount had pointed out, giving a possible lurking enemy a much sought point of attack. No, he should have stayed in town or returned with Blount in his car, and telling himself this, he struck out along the lonely, albeit short, stretch of road which led to the hotel and which was lighted by only a half dozen small incandescent globes strung at a considerable distance apart.

En route,<sup>6</sup> and as he was saying to himself that it was a blessed thing that it was only a few hundred yards and that he was well-armed and fairly well constructed physically for a contest, a car swerved about a bend in the road a short distance ahead and stopped. Two men got out and, in the shadow back of the lights, which were less flaring than was usual, began to examine a wheel. It seemed odd to him on the instant that its headlights were so dim. Why should they be so dim at this time of night and why should this strange car stop just here at this lonely bend just as he was approaching it? Also why should he feel so queer about it or them, for at once his flesh began to creep and his hair to tingle. As he neared the car he moved to give it as wide a berth as the road would permit. But now one of the men left the wheel and approached him. Instantly, with almost an involuntary urge, he brought the revolver out of his hip pocket and stuffed it in his coat pocket. At the same time he stopped and called to the stranger:

"Stay right where you are, Mister. I'm armed, and I don't want you to come near me. If you do I'll shoot. I don't

know who you are, or whether you're a friend or not, but I don't want you to move. Now, if there's anything you want, ask it from where you are."

The stranger stopped where he stood, seemingly surprised.

"I was going to ask you for a match," he said, "and the way to Trager's Point."

"Well, I haven't a match," returned Gregory savagely, "And Trager's Point is out that way. There's the hotel . . . if you're coming from there, why didn't you ask for directions there, and for matches, too?" He paused, while the man in the shadow seemed to examine him curiously.

"Oh, all right," he returned indifferently. "I don't want anything you don't want to give," but instead of returning to the car, he stood where he was, following Gregory with his eyes.

Gregory's skin seemed to rise on the back of his neck like the fur of a cat. He fairly tingled as he drew his revolver from his pocket and waved it ominously before him.

"Now, I'm going to walk around you two," he called, "and I want you to stand right where you are. I have you covered, and at the first move I'll shoot. You won't have any trouble out of me if you're not looking for it, but don't move," and he began orienting his own position so as to keep them directly in range of his eyes and weapon.

"Don't move!" he kept calling until he was well up the road, and then suddenly, while the men, possibly in astonishment, were still looking at him, turned and ran as fast as he could, reaching the hotel steps breathless and wet.

"That's the last lone trip for me," he said solemnly to himself.

When he spoke to Blount about it the latter seemed inclined to pool-pool his fears. Why should any one want to choose any such open place to kill or waylay another? There might have been other passengers on the train. A stray auto might be coming along there at any time. The men might have wanted a match, and not have been coming from the

hotel at all. There was another road there which did not turn in at the hotel.

Still Gregory was inclined to believe that harm had been intended him—he could scarcely say why to himself—just plain intuition, he contended.

And then a day or two later—all the more significant now because of this other incident—Mrs. Skelton seemed to become more and more thoughtful as to his comfort and wellbeing. She took her meals at one of the tables commanding a view of the sea, and with (most frequently) one or the other, or both, broker friends as companions, to say nothing of occasional outside friends. But usually there was a fourth empty chair, and Gregory was soon invited to occupy that, and whenever Blount was present, a fifth was added. At first he hesitated, but urged on by Blount, who was amused by her, he accepted. Blount insisted that she was a come character. She was so dressy, sporty, unctuous, goodnatured—the very best kind of a seaside companion.

“Why, man, she’s interesting,” the latter insisted one night as they were taking a ride after dinner. “Quite a sporty ‘fair and forty,’ that. I like her. I really do. She’s probably a crook, but she plays bridge well, and she’s good at golf. Does she try to get anything out of you?”

“Not a thing, that I can see,” replied Gregory. “She seems to be simple enough. She’s only been here about three weeks.”

“Well, we’d better see what we can find out about her. I have a hunch that she’s in on this, but I can’t be sure. It looks as though she might be one of Tilney’s stool pigeons. But let’s play the game and see how it comes out. I’ll be nice to her for your sake, and you do the same for mine.”

Under the warming influence of this companionship, things seemed to develop fairly rapidly. It was only a day or two later, and after Gregory had seated himself at Mrs. Skelton’s table, that she announced with a great air of secrecy and as though it were hidden and rather important information, that a friend of hers, a very clever Western girl

of some position and money, one Imogene Carle of Cincinnati, no less, a daughter of the very wealthy Brayton Carle's of that city, was coming to this place to stay for a little while. Mrs. Skelton, it appeared, had known her parents in that city fifteen years before. Imogene was her owny ownest pet. She was now visiting the Wilson Fletchers at Gray's Cove, on the Sound, but Mrs. Skelton had prevailed upon her parents to let her visit her here for a while. She was only twenty, and from now on she, Mrs. Skelton, was to be a really, truly chaperone. Didn't they sympathize with her? And if they were all very nice--and with this a sweeping glance included them all--they might help entertain her. Wouldn't that be fine? She was a darling of a girl, clever, magnetic, a good dancer, a pianist--in short, various and sundry things almost too good to be true. But, above all other things, she was really very beautiful, with a wealth of brown hair, brown eyes, a perfect skin, and the like. Neither Blount nor Gregory offered the other a single look during this recital, but later on, meeting on the great veranda which faced the sea Blount said to him, "Well, what do you think?"

"Yes, I suppose it's the one. Well, she tells it well. It's interesting to think that she is to be so perfect, isn't it?" he laughed.

A few days later the fair visitor put in an appearance, and she was all that Mrs. Skelton had promised, and more. She was beautiful. Gregory saw her the first time as he entered the large dining-room at seven. She was, as Mrs. Skelton had described her, young, certainly not more than twenty-one at most. Her eyes were a light gray-brown and her hair and skin and hands were full of light. She seemed simple and unpretentious, laughing, gay, not altogether fine or perfect, but fairly intelligent, and good to look at--very. She was at Mrs. Skelton's table, the brokers paying her marked attention, and, at sight, Blount liked her, too.

"Say," he began, "some beauty, eh? I'll have to save you from yourself, I fancy. I'll tell you how we'll work it. You

save me, and I'll save you. The old lady certainly knows how to select 'em, apparently, and so does Tilney. Well now, my boy, look out!" and he approached with the air of one who was anxious to be a poor stricken victim himself.

Gregory had to laugh. However much he might be on his guard, he was interested, and as if to heighten this she paid more attention to Mrs. Skelton and her two friends than she did to Gregory or Blount. She was, or pretended to be absolutely sincere, and ignorant of her possible role as a siren, and they in turn pretended to accept her at her own valuation, only Blount announced after dinner very gaily that she might siren him all she blanked pleased. He was ready. By degrees, however, even during this first and second evening, Gregory began to feel that he was the one. He caught her looking at him slyly or shyly, or both, and he insisted to himself stubbornly and even vainly enough that he was her intended victim. When he suggested as much to Blount the other merely laughed.

"Don't be so vain," he said. "You may not be. I wish I were in your place. I'll see if I can't help take her attention from you," and he paid as much attention to her as any one.

However, Gregory's mind was not to be disabused. He watched her narrowly, while she on her part chattered gaily of many things--her life the winter before in Cincinnati, the bathing at Beachampton where she had recently been, a yachting trip she had been promised, tennis, golf. She was an expert at tennis, as she later proved, putting Gregory in a heavy perspiration whenever he played with her, and keeping him on the jump. He tried to decide for himself at this time whether she was making any advances, but could not detect any. She was very equitable in the distribution of her favors, and whenever the dancing began in the East room took as her first choice one of the brokers and then Blount.

The former, as did Mrs. Skelton and the brokers, had machines, and by her and them, in spite of the almost ever-

present Blount, Gregory was invited to be one of a party in one or the other of their cars whenever they were going anywhere of an afternoon or evening. He was suspicious of them, however, and refused their invitations except when Blount was on the scene and invited, when he was willing enough to accept. Then there were whist, pinochle, or poker games in the hotel occasionally, and in these Gregory as well as Blount, when he was there, were wont to join, being persistently invited. Gregory did not dance, and Imogene ragged him as to this. Why didn't he learn? It was wonderful! She would teach him! As she passed amid the maze of dancers at times he could not help thinking how graceful she was, how full of life and animal spirits. Blount saw this and teased him, at the same time finding her very companionable and interesting himself. Gregory could not help thinking what a fascinating, what an amazing thing, really, it was (providing it were true) that so dark a personality as Tilney could secure such an attractive girl to do his vile work. Think of it, only twenty-one, beautiful, able to further herself in many ways no doubt, and yet here she was under suspicion of him, a trickster possibly. What could be the compulsion, the reward?

"My boy, you don't know these people," Blount was always telling him. "They're the limit. In politics you can get people to do anything—anything. It isn't like the rest of life or business, it's just politics, that's all. It seems a cynical thing to say, but it's true. Look at your own investigations! What do they show?"

"I know, but a girl like that now——" replied Gregory solemnly.

But after all, as he insisted to Blount, they did not *know* that there was anything to all this. She might and she might not be a siren. It might be possible that both of them were grossly misjudging her, and other absolutely innocent people.

So far, all that they had been able to find out concerning Mrs. Skelton was that she was, as she represented herself to

be, the successful owner and manager of a theatrical agency. She might have known the better days and connections which she boasted. Gregory felt at times as though his brain were whirling, like a man confronted by enemies in the dark, fumbling and uncertain, but he and Blount both agreed that the best thing was to stay here and see it through, come what might. It was a good game even as it stood, interesting, very. It showed, as Blount pointed out to him, a depth to this political mess which he was attempting to expose which previously even he had not suspected.

"Stick by," the other insisted sport-lovingly. "You don't know what may come of this. It may provide you the very club you're looking for. Win her over to your side if you can. Why not? She might really fall for you. Then see what comes of it. You can't be led into any especial trap with your eyes open."

Gregory agreed to all this after a time. Besides, this very attractive girl was beginning to appeal to him<sup>9</sup> in a very subtle way. He had never known a woman like this before—never even seen one. It was a very new and attractive game, of sorts. He began to spruce up and attempt to appear a little gallant himself. A daily report of his movements was being filed each morning, though. Every night he returned with Blount in his car, or on an early train. There was scarcely a chance for a compromising situation, and still there might be—who knows?

On other evenings, after the fashion of seaside hotel life, Gregory and Imogene grew a little more familiar. Gregory learned that she played and sang, and listening to her, that she was of a warm and even sensuous disposition. She was much more sophisticated than she had seemed at first, as he could now see, fixing her lips in an odd inviting pout at times and looking alluringly at one and another, himself included. Both Blount and himself, once the novelty of the supposed secret attack had worn off, ventured to jest with her about it, or rather to hint vaguely as to her mission.

"Well, how goes the great game to-night?" Blount once



asked her during her second or third week, coming up to where she and Gregory were sitting amid the throng on the general veranda, and eyeing her in a sophisticated or smilingly cynical way.

"What game?" She looked up in seemingly complete innocence.

"Oh, snaring the appointed victim. Isn't that what all attractive young women do?"

"Are you referring to me?" she inquired with considerable hauteur and an air of injured innocence. "I'd have you know that I don't have to snare any one, and particularly not a married man." Her teeth gleamed maliciously.

Both Gregory and Blount were watching her closely.

"Oh, of course not. Not a married man, to be sure. And I wasn't referring to you exactly—just life, you know, the game."

"Yes, I know," she replied sweetly. "I'm jesting, too." Both Gregory and Blount laughed.

"Well, she got away with it without the tremor of an eyelash, didn't she?" Blount afterward observed, and Gregory had to agree that she had.

Again, it was Gregory who attempted a reference of this kind. She had come out after a short instrumental interpretation at the piano, where, it seemed to him, she had been posing in a graceful statuesque way—for whose benefit? He knew that she knew he could see her from where he sat.

"It's pretty hard work, without much reward," he suggested seemingly idly.

"What is? I don't quite understand," and she looked at him questioningly.

"No?" he smiled in a light laughing manner. "Well, that's a cryptic way I have. I say things like that. Just a light hint at a dark plot, possibly. You mustn't mind me. You wouldn't understand unless you know what I know."

"Well, what is it you know, then, that I don't?" she inquired.

"Nothing definite yet. Just an idea. Don't mind me."

"Really, you are very odd, both you and Mr. Blount. You are always saying such odd things and then adding that you don't mean anything. And what's cryptic?"

Gregory, still laughing at her, explained.

"Do you know, you're exceedingly interesting to me as a type. I'm watching you all the while."

"Yes?" she commented, with a lifting of the eyebrows and a slight distention of the eyes. "That's interesting. Have you made up your mind as to what type I am?"

"No, not quite yet. But if you're the type I think you are, you're very clever. I'll have to hand you the palm on that score."

"Really, you puzzle me," she said seriously. "Truly, you do. I don't understand you at all. What is it you are talking about? If it's anything that has any sense in it I wish you'd say it out plain, and if not I wish you wouldn't say it at all."

Gregory stared. There was an odd ring of defiance in her voice.

"Please don't be angry, will you?" he said, slightly disconcerted. "I'm just teasing, not talking sense."

She arose and walked off, while he strolled up and down the veranda looking for Blount. When he found him, he narrated his experience.

"Well, it's just possible that we are mistaken. You never can tell. Give her a little more rope. Something's sure to develop soon."

And thereafter it seemed as if Mrs. Skelton and some others might be helping her in some subtle way about something, the end or aim of which he could not be quite sure. He was in no way disposed to flatter himself, and yet it seemed at times as if he were the object of almost invisible machinations. In spite of what had gone before, she still addressed him in a friendly way, and seemed not to wish to avoid him, but rather to be in his vicinity at all times.

A smug, dressy, crafty Jew of almost minute dimensions arrived on the scene and took quarters somewhere in the

building, coming and going and seeming never to know Mrs. Skelton or her friends, and yet one day, idling across some sand dunes which skirted an adjacent inlet, he saw them, Imogene and the ant-like Jew, walking along together. He was so astounded that he stopped in amazement. His first thought was to draw a little nearer and to make very sure, but realizing, as they walked slowly in his direction, that he could not be mistaken, he beat a hasty retreat. That evening Blount was taken in on the mystery, and at dinner time, seeing the Hebrew enter and seat himself in state at a distant table, he asked casually, "A newcomer, isn't he?"

Mrs. Skelton, Imogene, and the one broker present, surveyed the stranger with curious but unacquainted indifference.

"Haven't the slightest idea," answered the broker. "Never saw him before. Cloaks and suits, I'll lay a thousand."

"He looks as though he might be rich, whoever he is," innocently commented Imogene.

"I think he came Thursday. He doesn't seem to be any one in particular, that's sure," added Mrs. Skelton distantly, and the subject was dropped.

Gregory was tempted to accuse the young woman and her friends, then and there of falsehood, but he decided to wait and study her. This was certainly becoming interesting. If they could lie like that, then something was surely in the air. So she was a trickster, after all, and she was so charming. His interest in her and Mrs. Skelton and their friends grew apace.

And then came the matter of the mysterious blue racer,<sup>10</sup> or "trailer," as Gregory afterward came to call it, a great hulking brute of a car, beautifully, even showily, made, and with an engine that talked like no other. There was a metallic ring about it which seemed to carry a long way through the clear air and over the sands which adjoined the sea. It was the possession, so he learned later through Mrs. Skelton, of one of four fortunate youths who were summering at the next hotel west, about a mile away. The owner, one Castle-

man by name, the son and heir to a very wealthy family, was a friend of hers whom she had first met in a commercial way in the city. They came over after Imogene's arrival, she explained, to help entertain, and they invariably came in this car. Castleman and his friends, smart, showy youths all, played tennis and bridge, and knew all the latest shows and dances and drinks. They were very gay looking, at least three of them, and were inclined to make much of Imogene, though, as Mrs. Skelton cautiously confided to Gregory after a time, she did not propose to allow it. Imogene's parents might not like it. On the other hand, Gregory and Blount, being sober men both and of excellent discretion, were much more welcome!

Almost every day thereafter Mrs. Skelton would go for a ride in her own car or that of Castleman, taking Gregory if he would, and Imogene for companions. Blount, however, as he explicitly made clear at the very beginning, was opposed to this.

"Don't ever be alone with her, I tell you, or just in the company of her and her friends anywhere except on this veranda. They're after you, and they're not finding it easy, and they're beginning to work hard. They'll give themselves away in some way pretty soon, just as sure as you're sitting there. They want to cut me out, but don't let them do it—or if you do, get some one in my place. You don't know where they'll take you. That's the way people are framed. Take me, or get them to use my machine and you take some other man. Then you can regulate the conditions partially anyhow."

Gregory insisted that he had no desire to make any other arrangements, and so, thereafter, whenever an invitation was extended to him, Blount was always somehow included, although, as he could see, they did not like it. Not that Imogene seemed to mind, but Mrs. Skelton always complained, "Must we wait for him?" or "isn't it possible, ever, to go anywhere without him?" . . .

Gregory explained how it was. Blount was an old and dear friend of his. They were practically spending the sum-

mer together. Blount had nothing to do just now.... They seemed to take it all in the best part, and thereafter Blount was always ready, and even willing to suggest that they come along with him in his car.

But the more these accidental prearrangements occurred, the more innocently perverse was Mrs. Skelton in proposing occasional trips of her own. There was an interesting walk through the pines and across the dunes to a neighboring hotel which had a delightful pavilion, and this she was always willing to essay with just Gregory. Only, whenever he agreed to this, and they were about to set out, Imogene would always appear and would have to be included. Then Mrs. Skelton would remember that she had forgotten her parasol or purse or handkerchief, and would return for it, leaving Imogene and Gregory to stroll on together. But Gregory would always wait until Mrs. Skelton returned. He was not to be entrapped like this.

By now he and Imogene, in spite of this atmosphere of suspicion and uncertainty, had become very friendly. She liked him, he could see that. She looked at him with a slight widening of the eyes and a faint distention of the nostrils at times, which spelled—what? And when seated with him in a gently inclusive and sympathetic and coaxing way. She had been trying to teach him to dance of late, and scolding him in almost endearing phrases such as “Now, you bad boy,” or “Oh, butterfingers!” (when once he had dropped something), or “Big, clumsy one—how big and strong you really are I can scarcely guide you.”

And to him, in spite of all her dark chicane, she was really beautiful, and so graceful! What a complexion, he said to himself on more than one occasion. How light and silken her hair! And her eyes, hard and gray-brown, and yet soft, too—to him. Her nose was so small and straight, and her lip line so wavily cut, like an Englishwoman's, full and drooping in the center of the upper lip. And she looked at him so when they were alone! It was disturbing.

But as to the Blue Trailer on these careening<sup>12</sup> nights. Chancing one night to be invited by Mrs. Skelton for a twenty-five mile run to Bayside, Blount accompanying them, they had gone ten miles, it seemed to him, when the hum of a peculiarly and powerfully built motor came to him. It was like a distant bee buzzing, or a hornet caught under a glass. There was something fierce about it, savage. On the instant he recalled it now, recognized it as the great blue machine belonging to young Castleman. Why should he be always hearing it, he asked, when they were out? And then quite thoughtlessly he observed to Imogene:

"That sounds like Castleman's car, doesn't it?"

"It does, doesn't it?" she innocently replied. "I wonder if it could be."

Nothing caused him to think any more about it just then, but another time when he was passing along a distant road he heard its motor nearby on another road, and then it passed them. Again, it brought its customary group to the same inn in which he and Blount and Imogene and Mrs. Skelton were.

Suddenly it came to him just what it meant. The last time he had heard it, and every time before that, he now remembered, its sound had been followed by its appearance at some road side inn or hotel whenever he, Imogene and Blount happened to be in the same party; and it always brought with it this selfsame group of young men ("joy riders," they called themselves), accidentally happening in on them, as they said. And now he remembered (and this fact was corroborated by the watchful Blount) that if the car had not been heard, and they had not appeared, either Mrs. Skelton or Imogene invariably sought the ladies' retiring room once they had reached their destination, if they had one, when later the car would be heard tearing along in the distance and the "joy riders" would arrive. But what for? How to compromise him exactly, if at all?

One night after Mrs. Skelton had left them in one of these inns, but before the "joy riders" had arrived, Gregory

was sitting at the edge of a balcony overlooking a silent grove of pines when suddenly it seemed to him that he heard it coming in the distance, this great rumbling brute, baying afar off, like a bloodhound on the scent. There was something so eerie, uncanny about it or about the night, which made it so. And then a few moments later it appeared, and the four cronies strolled in, smart and summery in their appearance, seemingly surprised to find them all there. Gregory felt a bit cold and chill at the subtlety of it all. How horrible it was, trailing a man in this way! How tremendous the depths of politics, how important the control of all the great seething cities' millions, to these men—Tilney and his friends,—if they could find it important to plot against one lone investigating man like this! Their crimes! Their financial robberies! How well he knew some of them—and how near he was to being able to prove some of them and drive them out, away from the public treasury and the emoluments and honors of office!

That was why he was so important to them now—he a self-established newspaperman with a self-established investigating bureau. Actually, it was villainous, so dark and crafty. What were they planning, these two smiling women at his side and these four smart rounders, with their pink cheeks and affable manners? What could they want of him really? How would it all end?

As Mrs. Skelton, Imogene, Blount and himself were preparing to return, and Castleman and his friends were entering their own car, a third party hitherto unknown to Blount or Gregory appeared and engaged the two women in conversation, finally persuading them to return with them in their car. Mrs. Skelton thereupon apologized and explained that they were old friends whom she had not seen for a long time, and that they would all meet at the hotel later for a game of bridge. Blount and Gregory, left thus to themselves, decided to take a short cut to a nearby turnpike so as to beat them home. The move interested them, although they could not explain it at the time. It was while they were

following this road, however, through a section heavily shaded with trees, that they were suddenly confronted by the blazing lights of another machine descending upon them at full speed from the opposite direction, and even though Blount by the most amazing dexterity managed to throw his car into the adjacent fence and wood, still it came so close and was traveling at such terrific speed that it clipped their left rear wheel as he did so.

"Castleman's car," Blount said softly after it had passed. "I saw him. They missed us by an inch!"

"What do you think of that!" exclaimed Gregory cynically. "I wonder if they'll come back to see the result of their work?"

Even as they were talking, however, they heard the big car returning.

"Say, this looks serious! I don't like the looks of it!" whispered Blount. "That car would have torn us to bits and never been scratched. And here they are now. Better look out for them. It's just as well that we're armed. You have your gun, haven't you?"

The other group approached most brazenly.

"Hello! Any trouble?" they called from a distance. "So sorry," and then as though they had just discovered it, "—well, if it isn't Gregory and Blount! Well, well, fellows, so sorry! It was an accident, I assure you. Our steering gear<sup>13</sup> is out of order."

Gregory and Blount had previously agreed to stand their ground, and if any further treachery were intended it was to be frustrated with bullets. The situation was partially saved or cleared up by the arrival of a third car containing a party of four middle-aged men who, seeing them in the wood and the other car standing by, stopped to investigate. It was Gregory's presence of mind which kept them there.

"Do you mind staying by, Mister, until that other car leaves?" he whispered to one of the newcomers who was helping to extricate Blount's machine. "I think they pur-



posely tried to wreck us, but I'm not sure; anyway, we don't want to be left alone with them."

Finding themselves thus replaced and the others determined to stay, Castleman and his followers were most apologetic and helpful. They had forgotten something back at the inn, they explained, and were returning for it. As they had reached this particular spot and had seen the lights of Blount's car, they had tried to stop, but something had gone wrong with the steering gear. They had tried to turn, but couldn't, and had almost wrecked their own car. Was there any damage? They would gladly pay. Blount assured them there was not, the while he and Gregory accepted their apologies in seeming good part, insisting however, that they needed no help. After they had gone Blount and Gregory, with the strangers as guards, made their way to the hotel, only to find it dark and deserted.

What an amazing thing it all was, Gregory said to himself over and over, the great metropolis threaded with plots like this for spoil—cold-blooded murder attempted, and that by a young girl and these young men scarcely in their middle twenties, and yet there was no way to fix it<sup>14</sup> on them. Here he was, fairly convinced that on two occasions murder had been planned or attempted, and still he could prove nothing, not a word, did not even dare to accuse any one! And Imogene, this girl of beauty and gayety, pretending an affection for him—and he half believing it—and at the same time convinced that she was in on the plot in some way. Had he lost his senses?

He was for getting out now posthaste, feeling, as he did that he was dealing with a band of murderers who were plotting his death by "accident" in case they failed to discredit him by some trick or plot, but Blount was of another mind. He could not feel that this was a good time to quit. After all, everything had been in their favor so far. In addition, Blount had come to the conclusion that the girl was a very weak tool of these other people, not a clever plotter herself. He argued this, he said, from certain things

which he had been able thus far to find out about her. She had once been, he said, the private secretary or personal assistant to a well known banker whose institution had been connected with the Tilney interests in Penyank, and whose career had ended in his indictment and flight. Perhaps there had been some papers which she had signed as the ostensible<sup>15</sup> secretary or treasurer, which might make her the victim of Tilney or of some of his political friends. Besides, by now he was willing to help raise money to carry Gregory's work on in case he needed any. The city should be protected from such people. But Blount considered Imogene a little soft or easy, and thought that Gregory could influence her to help him if he tried.

"Stick it out," he insisted "Stick it out. It looks pretty serious, I know, but you want to remember that you won't be any better off anywhere else, and here we at least know what we're up against. They know by now that we're getting on to them. They must. They're getting anxious, that's all, and the time is getting short. You might send for your wife, but that wouldn't help any. Besides, if you play your cards right with this girl you might get her to come over to your side. In spite of what she's doing, I think she likes you." Gregory snorted. "Or you might make her like you, and then you could get the whole scheme out of her. See how she looks at you all the time! And don't forget that every day you string this thing along without letting them bring it to a disastrous finish, the nearer you are to the election. If this goes on much longer without their accomplishing anything, Tilney won't have a chance to frame up anything new before the election will be upon him, and then it will be too late. Don't you see?"

On the strength of this, Gregory agreed to linger a little while longer, but he felt that it was telling on his nerves. He was becoming irritable and savage, and the more he thought about it the worse he felt. To think of having to be pleasant to people who were murderers at heart and trying to destroy you!

The next morning, however, he saw Imogene at breakfast, fresh and pleasant, and with that look of friendly interest in her eyes which more and more of late she seemed to wear and in spite of himself he was drawn to her, although he did his best to conceal it.

"Why didn't you come back last night to play cards with us?" she asked. "We waited and waited for you."

"Oh, haven't you heard about the latest 'accident'?" he asked, with a peculiar emphasis on the word, and looking at her with a cynical mocking light in his eyes.

"No. What accident?" She seemed thoroughly unaware that anything had happened.

"You didn't know, of course, that Castleman's car almost ran us down after you left us last night?"

"No!" she exclaimed with genuine surprise. "Where?"

"Well, just after you left us, in the wood beyond Bellepoint. It was so fortunate for you two to have left just when you did." And he smiled and explained briefly and with some cynical comments as to the steering gear that wouldn't work.

As he did so, he examined her sharply and she looked at him with what he thought might be pain or fear or horror in her glance. Certainly it was not a look disguising a sympathetic interest in the plans of her friends or employers, if they were such. Her astonishment was so obviously sincere, confusing, revealing, in a way that it all but won him. He could not make himself believe that she had had a hand in that anyhow. It must be as Blount said, that she was more of a tool herself than anything else. She probably couldn't help herself very well or didn't know the lengths to which her pretended "friends" were prepared to go. Her eyes seemed troubled, sad. She seemed weaker, more futile, than at any time since he had known her, and this, while it did not add particularly to his respect, softened his personal animosity. He felt that under the circumstances he might come to like her. He also thought that she might be made to like him enough to help him. He had the emotional

mastery of her, he thought, and that was something. He had described the incident with all the vividness of detail that he could, showing how he and Blount had escaped death by a hair's breadth.<sup>16</sup> She seemed a little sick, and shortly after left the table. Gregory had taken good care to make it plain that the strangers in the other car had been informed as to the exact details of the case, and had offered their services as witnesses in case they were wanted.

"But we don't propose to do anything about it," he said genially, "not now, anyhow," and it was then that she seemed to become a little sick or faint, and left him.

Whether owing to this conversation or the accident itself, or to circumstances concerning which he knew nothing, there now seemed to come a temporary lull in the activities of this group. The Blue Trailer disappeared as an active daily fact in their lives. Mrs. Skelton was called to the city on business for a few days, as well as Mr. Diamondberg, the "cloak and suit man," as Blount always called him, who in all the time he had been there had never publicly joined them. Mrs. Skelton came back later as cheerful and optimistic as ever, but in the meanwhile there had been an approach on the part of Imogene toward himself which seemed to promise a new order of things. She was freer, more natural and more genial than she had been hitherto. She was with him more, smiling, playful, and yet concerned, he thought. Because of their conversation the morning after the accident, he felt easier in her presence, more confidential, as though he might be able to talk to her about all this soon and get her to help him.

They had two hours together on the second afternoon of the absence of the others which brought them within sight of each other's point of view. It began after lunch, because Gregory had some reports to examine and was staying here to do it. She came over and stood beside him.

"What are you doing?" she asked.

"Oh, I'm looking up some facts," he replied enigmatically, smiling up at her. "Sit down."

They fell into conversation first about a tennis match which was being held here, and then about his work, which he described in part after observing that she knew all about it, or ought to.

"Why do you always talk to me that way about everything in connection with you?" she asked after a moment's pause. "You have such a queer way of speaking, as though I knew something I ought not to know about your affairs."

"Well, you do, don't you?" he questioned grimly, staring at her.

"Now, there it is again! What do you mean by that?"

"Do you really need to have me explain to you?" he went on in a hard cynical manner. "As though you didn't know! I don't suppose you ever heard of the Union Bank of Penyank, for instance? Or Mr. Swayne, its president? Or Mr. Riley, or Mr. Mears, the cashier?"

At the mention of these, as at the mention of the automobile accident, there was something which seemed to click like a camera shutter in her eyes, only this time there was no sign of pain, none even of confusion. She seemed, except for a faint trace of color, to be fairly calm and poised. She opened her mouth slightly, but more in an attempted smile of tolerance than anything else.

"The Union Bank? Mr. Swayne? Mr. Tilney? What are you talking about?" she persisted. "Who is Mr. Swayne, and where is the Union Bank?"

"Really, now, Miss Carle," he said with a kind of dogmatic fury, "if you want me to have any regard of any kind for you in the future, quit lying about this. You know well enough what I mean. You know who Mr. Swayne is, all right, and why he left Eastridge. You also know Mr. Diamondberg, although I heard you say you didn't, and that right after I had seen you walking with him out here on the dunes three weeks ago. You don't remember that, I suppose?" this as she fluttered slightly.

She stared, completely shaken out of her composure, and a real flush spread over her cheeks and neck. For the mo-

ment her expression hardened the least bit, then gave way to one of mingled weakness and confusion. She looked more or less guilty and genuinely distrait.

"Why, Mr. Gregory," she pleaded weakly, "how you talk! Positively, I haven't the slightest idea of what you mean, and I wish you wouldn't be so rough. I don't think you know what you're talking about, or if you do you certainly don't know anything about me. You must have me mixed up with some one else, or with something that I don't know anything about." She moved as if to leave.

"Now listen to me a minute," he said sharply, "and don't be so ready to leave. You know who I am, and just what I'm doing. I'm running an investigation bureau on my own account with which I mean to break up the present city political ring, and I have a lot of evidence which might cause Mr. Tilney and the mayor and some others a lot of trouble this fall, and they know it, and that's why you're out here. Mr. Tilney is connected with the mayor, and he used to be a bosom friend of your friend, Jack Swayne. And Diamondberg and Mrs. Skelton are in his employ right now, and so are you. You think I don't know that Castleman and his friends were working with you and Mrs. Skelton, and Diamondberg and these 'brokers' also, and that Castleman tried to run into us the other night and kill me, and that I'm being watched here all the time and spied on, but I am and I know it, and I'm not in the dark as to anything—not one thing—not even you," and he leered at her angrily.

"Now wait a moment," he went on quickly as she opened her mouth and started to say something. "You don't look to me to be so crafty and devilish as all this seems, or I wouldn't be talking to you at all, and your manner all along has been so different—you've appeared so friendly and sympathetic, that I've thought at times that maybe you didn't know exactly what was going on. Now, however, I see that you do. Your manner the other morning at breakfast made me think that possibly you were not so bad as you seemed. But now I see that you've been lying to me all along about

all this, just as I thought, only I must say that up to now I haven't been willing to believe it. This isn't the first time an attempt has been made to get people in this way, though. It's an old political trick, only you're trying to work it once more, and I don't propose that you shall work it on me if I can help it. Plainly, you people wouldn't hesitate to kill me, any more than Tilney hesitated to ruin Crothers three years ago, or than he would hesitate to ruin me or any other man or woman who got in his path, but he hasn't got me yet, and he's not going to, and you can tell him that for me. He's a crook. He controls a bunch of crooks—the mayor and all the people working with him—and if you're in with them, as I know you are, and know what you're doing, you're a crook too."

"Oh, oh, oh! Don't!" she exclaimed. "Please don't! This is too terrible! To think that you should talk to me in this way!" but she made no attempt to leave.

"Now I want to tell you something more, Miss Carle—if that's your real name—" Gregory went on as she was putting her hands to her temples and exclaiming, and she winced again. "As I said before, you don't look to me to be as bad as you seem, and for that reason I'm talking to you now. But just see how it is: Here I am, a young man just starting out in the world really, and here you are trying to ruin me. I was living here with my wife and my little two-year-old baby peacefully enough until she had to go to the mountains because our little boy was taken sick, and then you and Mrs. Skelton and Diamondberg and Castleman and the 'brokers' and all the rest of the crowd that are and have been around here watching and spying, came and began to cause me trouble. Now I'm not helpless. And you needn't think I wasn't warned before you came, because I was. There are just as many influential men on my side of the fence right now as there are on Tilney's—will be—and he isn't going to get away with this thing as easily as he thinks. But just think of your part in all this! Why should you want to ruin me or help these people? What have I

ever done to you? I can understand Tilney's wanting to do it. He thinks that I have facts which will injure him, and I have, and that because I haven't made any public statement the evidence is still in my hands, and that if I am put out of the way or discredited the whole thing will blow over and nothing will happen to him—but it won't. Not now any more. It can't. This thing will go on just the same, whether I am here or not. But that isn't the point either. I was told two months ago that you would come; not by Mrs. Skelton, but by friends of mine, and that an attempt would be made on my life," and at that she opened her eyes wide and sat there apparently amazed, "and here you are on schedule time and doing just as you were told, and apparently you aren't the least bit ashamed to do it. But don't you think it's a pretty shabby game for you to play?" He stared at her wearily and she at him, but now for the moment she said nothing, just sat there.

"That big blue machine that was to have killed me the other night," he went on, stretching matters a little in so far as his own knowledge was concerned, "was all arranged for long before you came down here. I haven't the slightest idea why you work for Tilney, but I know now that that's what you're doing, and I'm sick of you and the whole thing. You're just a plain little crook, that's all, and I'm through with you and this whole thing, and I don't want you to talk to me any more. What's more, I'm not going to leave this hotel, either, and you can take that news to Tilney if you want to, or Mrs. Skelton or whoever else is managing things here for him. I've kept a day-to-day record of everything that's happened so far, and I have witnesses, and if anything more happens to me here I'm going to the newspapers and expose the whole thing. If you had any sense of decency left you wouldn't be in on anything like this, but you haven't—you're just a shabby little trickster, and that lets you out, and that's all I have to say."

He stood up and made as if to walk off while Miss



Carle sat there, seemingly dazed, then jumped up and called after him:

"Mr. Gregory! Please! Please! Mr. Gregory, I want to tell you something!"

He stopped and turned. She came hurriedly up to him.

"Don't go," she pleaded, "not just yet. Wait a minute. Please come back. I want to talk to you." And though he looked at her rather determinedly, he followed her.

"Well?" he asked.

"You don't understand how it is," she pleaded, with a look of real concern in her eyes. "And I can't tell you either, just now, but I will some time if you will let me. But I like you, and I really don't want to do you any harm. Really, I don't. I don't know anything about these automobile things you're telling about—truly I don't. They're all terrible and horrible to me, and if they are trying to do anything like that, I don't know it, and I won't have anything more to do with it—really I won't. Oh, it's terrible!" And she clenched her hands. "I do know Mr. Diamondberg now, I admit that, but I didn't before I came down here, and Mr. Swayne and Mr. Tilney. I did come here to see if I could get you interested in me, but they didn't tell me just why. They told me—Mrs. Skelton did—that you, or some people whom you represented, were trying to get evidence against some friends of theirs—Mr. Tilney's, I believe—who were absolutely innocent, that you weren't happy with your wife, and that if some one, any one, were able to make you fall in love with her or just become very good friends, she might be able to persuade you not to do it, you see. There wasn't any plan, so far as I know, to injure you bodily in any way. They didn't tell me that they wanted to injure you physically—really they didn't. That's all news to me, and dreadful. All they said was that they wanted to get some one to get you to stop—make it worth your while in a money way, if I could. I didn't think there was anything so very wrong in that, seeing all they have done for me in the past—Mr. Tilney, Mrs. Skelton and some others. But after I saw you

"a little while I—" she paused and looked at him, then away, "I didn't think you were that kind of a man, you see, and so—well, it's different now. I don't want to do anything to hurt you. Really I don't. I couldn't—now."

"So you admit now that you do know Mr. Tilney," he commented sourly, but not without a sense of triumph behind it all.

"I just told you that," she said.

She stopped, and Gregory stared at her suspiciously. That she liked him was plain, and in a sense it was different from that of a mere passing flirtation, and as for himself—well, he couldn't help liking her in a genial way. He was free to admit that to himself, in spite of her trickery, and that she was attractive, and as yet she personally had not done anything to him, certainly nothing that he could prove. She seemed even now so young, although so sophisticated and wise, and much about her face, its smoothness, the delicate tracery of hair about her forehead, the drooping pout of the upper lip, sharpened his interest and caused him to meditate.

"Well?" he inquired after a time.

"Oh, I wish you wouldn't turn on me so and leave me," she pleaded. "I haven't done anything to you, have I? Not yet, anyhow."

"That's just the point—not yet. There's the whole story in a nutshell."<sup>17</sup>

"Yes, but I promise you faithfully that I won't, that I don't intend to. Really I don't. You won't believe me, but that's true. And I won't, I give you my word,—truly. Why won't you still be friends with me? I can't tell you any more about myself now than I have—not now—but I will some time, and I wish you would still be friends with me. I promise not to do anything to cause you trouble. I haven't really, have I? Have I?"

"How should I know?" he answered testily and roughly, the while believing that this was a deliberate attempt on her part to interest him in spite of himself, to get him not

to leave yet. "It seems to me you've done enough, being with these people. You've led me into going about with them for one thing. I would never have gone with them on most of these trips except for you. Isn't that enough? What more do you want? And why can't you tell me now," he demanded, feeling in a way the authority of a victor, "who these people are and all about them? I'd like to know. It might be a help to me, if you really wanted to do something for me. What are their plans, their game?"

"I don't know. I can't tell you any more than I have, truly I can't. If I find out, maybe I will some time. I promise to. But not now. I can't now. Can't you trust me that much? Can't you see that I like you, when I tell you so much? I haven't any plan to injure you personally, truly I haven't. I'm obliged to these people in one way and another, but nothing that would make me go that far. Won't you believe me?" She opened her eyes very wide in injury. There was something new in her expression, a luring, coaxing something.

"I haven't any one who is really close to me any more," she went on, "not anybody I like. I suppose it's all my own fault, but—" her voice became very sweet.

In spite of his precautions and the knowledge that his wife was the best and most suitable companion for him in the world, and that he was permanently fixed through his affection for his child and the helpful, hopeful mother of it, nevertheless he was moved by some peculiarity of this girl's temperament. What power had Tilney over her, that he could use her in this way? Think of it—a beautiful girl like this!

"What about Mrs. Skelton?" he demanded. "Who is she, anyhow? And these three gardeners around here? What is it they want?" (There were three gardeners of the grounds who whenever he and Imogene had been alone together anywhere managed somehow to be working near the scene—an arrival which caused him always instantly to depart.) "And Diamondberg?"

She insisted that in so far as the gardeners were concerned she knew absolutely nothing about them. If they were employed by Mrs. Skelton or any one, it was without her knowledge. As for Diamondberg, she explained that she had only met him since she had come here, but that she really did not like him. For some reason Mrs. Skelton had asked her to appear not to know him. Mrs. Skelton, she persisted, had known her years before in Cincinnati, as she had said, but more recently in the city. She had helped her to get various positions, twice on the stage. Once she had worked for Mr. Swayne, yes, for a year, but only as a clerk. She had never known anything about him or his plans or schemes, never. When Gregory wanted to know how it was that he was to be trapped by her, if at all, she insisted that she did not believe that he was to be trapped. It was all to have been as she said.

Gregory could not quite make out whether she was telling him the exact truth, but it was near enough, and it seemed to him that she could not be wholly lying. She seemed too frank and wishful. There was something sensuously affectionate in her point of view and her manner. He would know everything in the future, she insisted, if he wanted to, but only not now—please not now. Then she asked about his wife, where she was, when she was coming back.

"Do you love her very much?" she finally asked naively.

"Certainly I love her. Why do you ask? I've a two-year-old boy that I'm crazy about."

She looked at him thoughtfully, a little puzzled or uncertain, he thought.

They agreed to be friends after a fashion before they were through. He confessed that he liked her, but still that he did not trust her—not yet. They were to go on as before, but only on condition that nothing further happened to him which could be traced to her. She frankly told him that she could not control the actions of the others. They were their own masters, and, after a fashion, hers, but in so far as she could she would protect him. She did not believe that they

intended to try much longer. In so far as she was concerned he might go away if he chose. She could see him anywhere, if he would. She was not sure if that would make any difference in their plans or not. Anyhow, she would not follow him if he did go unless he wished it, but would prefer that he did. Perhaps nothing more would happen here. If she heard of anything she would tell him, or try to, in time. But she could not say more than that now. After a while, maybe, as soon as she could get out of here . . . there were certain things over which she had no control. She was very enigmatic and secretive, and he took it to mean that she was involved in some difficult situation and could not easily extricate herself.

"I wouldn't take too much stock in her, at that," Blount reflected when Gregory had told him about it. "Just keep your eyes open, that's all. Don't have anything to do with her in a compromising way. She may be lying to you again. Once a crook, always a crook." Such was his philosophy.

Mrs. Skelton returned on the third day after his long conversation with Imogene, and in spite of the fact that they had seemed to come closer together than ever before, to have established a friendly semi-defensive pact, still he sensed treachery. He could not make out what it was. She seemed to be friendly, simple, gay, direct, even wooing—and yet—what? He thought at one time that she might be the unconscious psychologic victim of Mrs. Skelton or of some one else; at other times, an absolutely unprincipled political philanderer. While pretending to be "on the level," as he phrased it, with him, she was crossing his path in such odd ways, making him uncertain as to whether, in spite of all she had said and was saying, she was still engaged in trying to compromise him. The whole thing began to take on the fascination of a game with the unconquerable lure of sex at the bottom of it—steeled as he was against compromising himself in any way.

Thus once, after a late card game, when he stepped out on a small veranda or balcony which graced the end of the

hall nearest which his room was situated, and which commanded a splendid view of the sea, he found her just outside his door alone, diaphanously attired, and very sympathetic and genial. Now that they were friends and had had this talk, there was something in her manner which always seemed to invite him on to a closer life with her without danger to himself, as she seemed to say. She would shield him against all, at her own expense. At the same time he was far—very far—from yielding. More than once he had insisted that he did not want to have anything to do with her in an affectional way, and yet here she was on this occasion, and although there might or there might not have been anything very alarming in that, he argued with himself afterward, yet since he had told her, this could be made to look as though she were trying to overpersuade him, to take him off his guard. Any guest of the hotel might have done as much (her room was somewhere near there), but Rule One, as laid down by Blount, and as hitherto practised by him, was never, under any circumstances which might be misinterpreted, to be alone with her. And besides, when he withdrew, as he did at once, excusing himself lightly and laughingly, he saw two men turning in at a cross corridor just beyond, and one, seeing him turn back, said to the other, "It must be on the other side, Jim." Well, there might not have been anything very significant in that, either. Any two men might accidentally turn into a hall on an end balcony of which a maiden was sitting in very diaphanous array, but still——

It was the same whenever he walked along the outer or sea wall<sup>18</sup> at night, listening to the thunder of the water and meditating on the night and the beauty of the hotel and the shabbiness of politics. Imogene was always about him when she might be with safety, as he saw it, but never under such circumstances as could be made to seem that they were alone together. Bullen, one of the two brokers, who seemed not a bad sort after his kind, came out there one night with Mrs. Skelton and Imogene, and

seeing Gregory, engaged him in conversation and then left Imogene to his care. Gregory, hating to appear asininely suspicious under such circumstances, was genuinely troubled as to what to do in such cases as these. Always now he was drawn to her, painfully so, and yet—He had told her more than once that he did not wish to be alone with her in this way, and yet here she was, and she was always insisting that she did not wish him to be with her if he objected to it, and yet look at this! Her excuse always was that she could not help it, that it was purely accidental or planned by them without her knowledge. She could not avoid all accidents. When he demanded to know why she did not leave, clear out of all of this, she explained that without great injury to herself and Mrs. Skelton she could not, and that besides he was safer with her there.

"What is this?" he asked on this occasion. "Another plan?" Feeling her stop and pull back a little, he felt ashamed of himself. "Well, you know what I've been telling you all along," he added gruffly.

"Please don't be so suspicious, Ed. Why do you always act so? Can't I even walk out here? I couldn't avoid this to-night, truly I couldn't. Don't you suppose I have to play a part too—for a time, anyhow? What do you expect me to do—leave at once? I can't, I tell you. Won't you believe me? Won't you have a little faith in me?"

"Well, come on," he returned crossly, as much irritated with himself as any one. "Give me your arm. Give a dog a bad name, you know," and he walked her courteously but firmly in the direction of the principal veranda, trying to be nice to her at the same time.

"I tell you, Imogene, I can't and I won't do this. You must find ways of avoiding these things. If not, I'm not going to have anything to do with you at all. You say you want me to be friends with you, if no more. Very well. But how are we going to do it?" and after more arguments of this kind they parted with considerable feeling, but not altogether antagonistic, at all.

Yet by reason of all this finally, and very much to his personal dissatisfaction, he found himself limited as to his walks and lounging places as much as if he had been in prison. There was a little pergola at one end of the lawn with benches and flowering vines which had taken his fancy when he first came, and which he had been accustomed to frequent as a splendid place to walk and smoke, but not any more. He was too certain of being picked up there, or of being joined by Mrs. Skelton and Imogene, only to be left with Imogene, with possibly the three gardeners or a broker as witnesses. He could not help thinking how ridiculous it all was.

He even took Imogene, he and Blount, in Blount's car, and Mrs. Skelton with them or not, as the case might be—it was all well enough so long as Blount was along—to one place or another in the immediate vicinity—never far, and always the two of them armed and ready for any emergency or fray, as they said. It seemed a risky thing to do, still they felt a little emboldened by their success so far, and besides, Imogene was decidedly attractive to both of them. Now that she had confessed her affection for Gregory she was most alluring with him, and genial to Blount, teasing and petting him and calling him the watchdog. Blount was always crowing over how well he and Gregory were managing the affair. More than once he had pointed out, even in her presence, that there was an element of sport or fascinating drama in it, that she "couldn't fool them," all of which was helping mightily to pass the time, even though his own and Gregory's life, or at least their reputation, might be at stake.

"Go on, go on, is my advice," Blount kept saying now that he was being amused. "Let her fall in love with you. Make her testify on your behalf. Get a confession in black and white, if you can. It would be a great thing in the campaign, if you were compelled to use it." He was a most practical and political soul, for all his geniality.

Gregory could not quite see himself doing that, however.



He was too fond of her. She was never quite so yielding, so close to him, as now. When he and Blount were out with her, now, the two of them ventured to rag her as to her part in all this, asking her whether the other car were handy, whether the gardeners had been properly lined up, and as to who was behind this tree or that house. "There'd be no use in going if everything wasn't just right," they said. She took it all in good part, even laughing and mocking them.

"Better look out! Here comes a spy now," she would sometimes exclaim at sight of a huckster driving a wagon or a farm-hand pushing a wheelbarrow.

To both Blount and Gregory it was becoming a farce, and yet between themselves they agreed that it had its charm. They were probably tiring her backers and they would all quit soon. They hoped so, anyhow.

But then one night, just as they had concluded that there might not be so very much to this plot after all, that it was about all over, and Mrs. Gregory was writing that she would soon be able to return, the unexpected happened. They were returning from one of those shorter outings which had succeeded the longer ones of an earlier day, Blount and Gregory and Imogene, and true to his idea of avoiding any routine procedure which might be seized upon by the enemy as something to expect and therefore to be used, Blount passed the main entrance and drove instead around to a side path which led to a sunk-in porch flanked on either side by high box hedges and sheltered furry pines. True also to their agreed plan of never being separated on occasions like this, they both walked to the door with Imogene, Blount locking his car so that it could not be moved during his absence. On the steps of this side porch they chattered a little, bantering Imogene about another safe night, and how hard it was on the gardeners to keep them up so late and moving about in the dark in this fashion, when Imogene said she was tired and would have to go. She laughed at them for their brashness.

"You two think you're very smart, don't you?" she smiled

a little wearily. "It would serve you right if something did happen to both of you one of these days—you know so much."

"Is that so?" chuckled Blount. "Well, don't hold any midnight conferences as to this. You'll lose your beauty sleep if you do."

To which Gregory added, "Yes, with all this hard work ahead of you every day, Imogene, I should think you'd have to be careful."

"Oh hush, and go on," she laughed, moving toward the door.

But they had not gone more than a hundred and fifty feet down the shadowy side path before she came running after them, quite out of breath.

"Oh, dear!" she called sweetly as she neared them, and they having heard her footsteps had turned. "I'm so sorry to trouble you, but some one has locked that side door, and I can't open it or make them hear. Won't one of you come and help me?" Then, as the two of them turned, "That's right. I forgot. You always work in pairs, don't you?"

Blount chortled. Gregory smiled also. They couldn't help it. It was so ridiculous at times—on occasions like this, for instance.

"Well, you see how it is," Gregory teased, "the door may be very tightly closed, and it might take the two of us to get it open."

Seeing that Blount was really coming, he changed his mind. "I guess I can get it open for her. Don't bother this time. I'll have to be going in, anyhow," he added. The thought came to him that he would like to be with Imogene a little while—just a few moments.

Blount left them after a cautioning look and a cheery good night. In all the time they had been together they had not done this, but this time it seemed all right. Gregory had never felt quite so close to Imogene as he did this evening. She had seemed so warm, laughing, gay. The night had been sultry, but mellow. They had tittered and jested over such

trifling things, and now he felt that he would like to be with her a while longer. She had become more or less a part of his life, or seemingly so, such a genial companion. He took her arm and tucked it under his own.

"It was nice over there at the Berkeley," he commented, thinking of an inn they had just left. "Beautiful grounds—and that music! It was delightful, wasn't it?" They had been dancing together.

"Oh, dear," she sighed, "the summer will soon be over, and then I'll have to be going back, I suppose. I wish it would never end. I wish I could stay here forever, just like this, if you were here." She stopped and looked at the tree-tops, taking a full breath and stretching out her arms. "And do look at those fireflies," she added, "aren't they wonderful?" She hung back, watching the flashing fireflies under the trees.

"Why not sit down here a little while?" he proposed as they neared the steps. "It isn't late yet."

"Do you really mean it?" she asked warmly.

"You see, I'm beginning to be so foolish as to want to trust you. Isn't that idiotic? Yes, I'm even going to risk fifteen minutes with you."

"I wish you two would quit your teasing, just once," she pleaded. "I wish you would learn to trust me and leave Blount behind just once in a while, seeing that I've told you so often that I mean to do nothing to hurt you without telling you beforehand."

Gregory looked at her, pleased. He was moved, a little sorry for her, and a little sorrier for himself.

In spite of himself, his wife and baby, as he now saw, he had come along a path he should not have, and with one whom he could not conscientiously respect or revere. There was no future for them together, as he well knew, now or at any other time. Still he lingered.

"Well, here we are," he said, "alone at last. Now you can do your worst, and I have no one to protect me."

"It would serve you right if I did, Mr. Smarty. But if I

had suggested that we sit down for a minute you would have believed that the wood was full of spies. It's too funny for words, the way you carry on. But you'll have to let me go upstairs to change my shoes, just the same. They've been hurting me dreadfully, and I can't stand them another minute. If you want to, you can come up to the other balcony, or I'll come back here. I won't be a minute. Do you mind?"

"Not at all," he assented, thinking that the other balcony would not be as open as this, much too private for him and her. "Certainly not. Run along. But I'd rather you came back here. I want to smoke anyhow," and he drew out his cigar and was about to make himself comfortable when she came back.

"But you'll have to get this door open for me," she said "I forgot about that."

"Oh, yes, that's right."

He approached it, looking first for the large key which always hung on one side at this hour of the night, but not seeing it, looked at the lock. The key was in it.

"I was trying before. I put it there," she explained.

He laid hold of it, and to his surprise it came open without any effort whatsoever, a thing which caused him to turn and look at her.

"I thought you said it wouldn't open," he said.

"Well, it wouldn't before. I don't know what makes it work now, but it wouldn't then. Perhaps some one has come out this way since. Anyhow, I'll run up and be down right away." She hurried up the broad flight of stairs which ascended leisurely from this entrance.

Gregory returned to his chair, amused but not conscious of anything odd or out of the way about the matter. It might well have been as she said. Doors were contrary at times, or some one might have come down and pushed it open. Why always keep doubting? Perhaps she really was in love with him, as she seemed to indicate, or mightily infatuated, and would not permit any one to injure him through her. It would seem so. really. After all, he kept saying to himself,

she was different now to what he had originally thought and what she had originally been, caught in a tangle of her own emotions and compelled by him to do differently from what she had previously planned. If he were not married as happily as he was, might not something come of this? He wondered.

The black-green wall of the trees just beyond where he was sitting, the yellow light filtering from the one bowl lamp which ornamented the ceiling, the fireflies and the sawing katydids,<sup>19</sup> all soothed and entertained him. He was beginning to think that politics was not such a bad business after all, his end of it at least, or being pursued even. His work thus far had yielded him a fair salary, furnishing as it had excellent copy for some of the newspapers and political organizations--the best was being reserved for the last--and was leading him into more interesting ways than the old newspaper days had, and the future, outside of what had happened in the last few weeks, looked promising enough. Soon he would be able to deal the current administration a body blow. This might raise him to a high position locally. He had not been so easily frustrated as they had hoped, and this very attractive girl had fallen in love with him.

For a while he stared down the black-green path up which they had come, and then fixed his eyes in lazy contemplation on one of the groups of stars showing above the treetops. Suddenly--or was it suddenly?--more a whisper or an idea--he seemed to become aware of something that sounded, as he listened more keenly, like a light footfall in the garden beyond the hedge. It was so very light, a mere tickle of the grass or stirring of a twig. He pricked up his ears and on the instant strained every muscle and braced himself, not that he imagined anything very dreadful was going to happen, but--were they up to their old tricks again? Was this the wonderful gardeners again? Would they never stop? Removing the cigar from his mouth and stilling the rocker in which he had been slowly moving to and

fro, he decided not to stir, not even to move his hands, so well concealed was he from the bushes on either side by the arrangement of the posts, one of which was to the left of him. In this position he might see and not be seen. Did they know he was there? How had they found out? Were they always watching yet? Was she a part of it? He decided to get up and leave, but a moment later thought it better to linger just a little, to wait and see. If he left and she came back and did not find him there—could it be that there was some new trick on foot?

While he was thus swiftly meditating, he was using his ears to their utmost. Certainly there was a light footfall approaching along the other side of the hedge to the left, two in fact, for no sooner was one seemingly still, near at hand, than another was heard coming from the same direction, as light and delicate as that of a cat—spies, trappers, murderers, even, as he well knew. It was so amazing, this prowling and stalking, so desperate and cruel, that it made him a little sick. Perhaps, after all, he had better have kept Blount with him—not have lingered in this fashion. He was about to leave, a nervous thrill chasing up and down his spine, when he heard what he took to be Imogene's step on the stair. Then she was coming back, after all, as she had said. She was not a part of this as he had feared—or was she? Who could tell? But it would be foolish to leave now. She would see that he was wholly suspicious again, and that stage had somehow seemed to be passing between them. She had promised on more than one occasion to protect him against these others, let alone herself. Anyhow he could speak of these newcomers and then leave. He would let her know that they were hanging about as usual, always ready to take advantage of his good nature.

But now, her step having reached the bottom of the stair and ceased, she did not come out. Instead, a light that was beside the door, but out at this hour, was turned on, and glancing back he could see her shadow, or thought he could, on the wall opposite, to the right. She was doing some-

thing—what? There was a mirror below the light. She might be giving her hair a last pat. She had probably arrayed herself slightly differently for him to see. He waited. Still she did not come. Then swiftly, a sense of something treacherous came over him, a creeping sensation of being victimized and defeated. He felt, over his taut nerves, this thrilling fear which seemed to almost convey the words: Move! Hurry! Run! He could not sit still a moment longer, but, as if under a great compulsion, leaped to his feet and sprang to the door just as he thought he heard additional movements and even whispers in the dark outside. What was it? Who? Now he would see!

Inside he looked for her, and, there she was, but how different! When she had gone upstairs she had been arrayed in a light summery dress, very smart and out-door-ish, but here she was clothed in a soft clinging housedress such as one would never wear outside the hotel. And instead of being adjusted with her customary care, it was decidedly awry, as though she might have been in some disturbing and unhappy contest. The collar was slightly torn and pulled open, a sleeve ripped at the shoulder and wrist, the hang of the skirt over the hips awry, and the shirt itself torn, a ragged slit over the knee. Her face had been powdered to a dead white, or she herself was overcome with fear and distress, and the hair above it was disarranged, as though it had been shaken or pulled to one side. Her whole appearance was that of one who had been assailed in some evil manner and who had come out of the contest disarranged as to her clothes and shaken as to her nerves.

Brief as his glance was, Gregory was amazed at the transformation. He was so taken aback that he could not say anything, but just what it all meant came to him in an intuitive flash. To fly was his one thought, to get out of the vicinity of this, not to be seen or taken near it. With one bound he was away and up the easy stair three at a time, not pausing to so much as look back at her, meeting her first wide half-frightened stare with one of astonishment, anger

and fear. Nor did he pause until he had reached his own door, through which he fairly jumped, locking himself in as he did so. Once inside, he stood there white and shaking, waiting for any sound which might follow, any pursuit, but hearing none, going to his mirror and mocking at himself for being such a fool as to be so easily outwitted, taken in, after all his caution and sophisticated talk. Lord! he sighed. Lord!

And after all her protests and promises, this very evening, too, he thought. What a revelation of the unreliability and treachery of human nature! So she had been lying to him all the time, leading him on in the face of his almost boastful precautions and suspicions, and to-night, almost at the close of the season, had all but succeeded in trapping him! Then Tilney was not so easily to be fooled, after all. He commanded greater loyalty and cunning in his employees than he had ever dreamed. But what could he say to her, now that he knew what she really was, if ever he saw her again? She would just laugh at him, think him a fool, even though he had managed to escape. Would he ever want to see her again? Never, he thought. But to think that any one so young, so smooth, so seemingly affectionate, could be so ruthless, so devilishly clever and cruel! She was much more astute than either he or Blount had given her credit for.

After moving the bureau and chairs in front of the door, he called up Blount and sat waiting for him to come.

Actually, as he saw it now, she had meant to stage a seeming assault in which he would have been accused as the criminal and if they had sufficient witnesses he might have had a hard time proving otherwise. After all, he had been going about with her a great deal, he and Blount, and after he had told himself that he would not.

Her witnesses were there, close upon him, in the dark. Even though he might be able to prove his previous good character,<sup>20</sup> still, considering the suspicious fact that he had trifled with her and this treacherous situation so long, would a jury or the public believe him? A moment or two more,



and she would have screamed out that he was attacking her, and the whole hotel would have been aroused. Her secret friends would have rushed forward and beaten him. Who knows?—they might even have killed him! And their excuse would have been that they were justified. Unquestionably she and her friends would have produced a cloud of witnesses. But she hadn't screamed—there was a curious point as to that, even though she had had ample time (and she had had) and it was expected of her and intended that she should! Why hadn't she? What had prevented her? A strange, disturbing exculpating thought began to take root in his mind, but on the instant also he did his best to crush it.

"No, no! I have had enough now," he said to himself. "She did intend to compromise me and that is all there is to it. And in what a fashion. Horrible. No, this is the end. I will get out now, to-morrow, that is one thing certain, go to my wife in the mountains, or bring her home." Meanwhile, he sat there trembling, revolver in hand, wiping the sweat from his face, for he did not know but that even yet they might follow him here and attempt the charge of assault anyhow. Would they—could they? Just then some one knocked on his door, and Gregory, after demanding to know who it was, opened it to Blount. He quickly told him of his evening's experience.

"Well," said Blount, heavily and yet amusedly, "She certainly is the limit. That was a clever ruse, say what you will, a wonder. And the coolness of her! Why, she joked with us about it! I thought you were taking a chance, but not a great one. I was coming around to think she might be all right, and now think of this! I agree with you that it is time for you to leave. I don't think you'll ever get her over to your side. She's too crafty."

The next morning Gregory was up early and on the veranda smoking and meditating as to his exact course. He would go now, of course, and probably never see this girl with her fiend's heart again. What a revelation! To think

that there were such clever, ruthless, beautiful sirens about in the same world with such women as his wife! Contrast them—his wife, faithful, self-sacrificing, patient, her one object the welfare of those whom she truly loved, and then put on the other side of the scale this girl—tricky, shameless, an actress, one without scruples or morals, her sole object in life, apparently, to advance herself in any way that she might, and that at the expense of everybody and everything!

He wanted to leave without seeing her, but in spite of himself he sat on, telling himself that it would do no harm to have just one last talk with her in order to clear up whether she had really intended to scream or no—whether she was as evil as he really thought now, confront her with her enormous treachery and denounce her for the villainess she was. What new lie would she have on her tongue now, he wondered? Would she be able to face him at all? Would she explain? Could she? He would like to take one more look at her, or see if she would try to avoid him completely. This morning she must be meditating on how unfortunately she had failed, missed out, and only last night she had taken his hand and smoothed it and whispered that she was not so bad, so mean as he thought her to be, and that some day he would find it out. And now see!

He waited a considerable time, and then sent up word that he wanted to see her. He did not want to see this thing closed in this fashion with no chance to at least berate her, to see what new lie she would tell. After a while she came down, pale and seemingly exhausted, a weary look about her eyes as though she had not slept. To his astonishment she came over quite simply to where he was sitting, and when he stood up at her approach as if to ward her off, stood before him, seemingly weaker and more hopeless than ever. What an excellent actress, he thought! He had never seen her so downcast, so completely overcome, so wilted.

"Well," he began as she stood there, "What new lie have you fixed up to tell me this morning?"

"No lie," she replied softly.

"What! Not a single lie? Anyhow, you'll begin by shamming contrition, won't you? You're doing that already. Your friends made you do it, of course, didn't they? Tilney was right there—and Mrs. Skelton! They were all waiting for you when you went up, and told you just what to do and how it had to be done, wasn't that it? And you had to do it, too, didn't you?" he sneered cynically.

"I told you I didn't have anything to say," she answered. "I didn't do anything—I mean I didn't intend to—except to signal you to run, but when you burst in on me that way—" He waved an impatient hand. "Oh, all right," she went on sadly. "I can't help it if you won't believe me. But it's true just the same. Everything you think, all except that automobile plot, and this is true, but I'm not asking you to believe me any more. I can't help it if you won't. It's too late. But I had to go through my part anyhow. Please don't look at me that way, Ed— not so hard. You don't know how really weak I am, or what it is that makes me do these things. But I didn't want to do anything to hurt you last night, not when I left you. And I didn't. I hadn't the slightest intention, really I hadn't. Oh, well, sneer if you want to! I couldn't help myself, though, just the same—believe it or not. Nothing was farther from my mind when I came in, only— oh, what a state my life has come to, anyhow!" she suddenly exclaimed. "You don't know. Your life's not a mess, like mine. People have never had you in any position where they could make you do things. That's just the trouble—men never know women really." ("I should say not!" he interpolated.) "But I have had to do so many things I didn't want to do—but I'm not pleading with you, Ed, really I'm not. I know it's all over between us and no use, only I wish I could make you believe that as bad as I am I've never wanted to be as bad to you as I've seemed. Really, I haven't. Oh, honestly—"

"Oh, cut that stuff, please!" he said viciously. "I'm sick of it. It wasn't to hear anything like that that I sent for

you. The reason I asked you to come down here was merely to see how far you would face it out, whether you would have the nerve to come, really, that was all—or, just to see whether you would have a new lie to spring, and I see you have. You're a wonder, you are! But I'd like to ask you just one favor: Won't you please let me alone in the future? I'm tired, and I can't stand it any longer. I'm going away now. This fellow Tilney you are working for is very clever, but it's all over. It really is. You'll never get another chance at me if I know myself." He started to walk off.

"Ed! Ed!" she called. "Please—just a minute—don't go yet, Ed," she begged. "There's something I want to say to you first. I know all you say is true. There's nothing you can say that I haven't said to myself a thousand times. But you don't understand what my life has been like, what I've suffered, how I've been pushed around, and I can't tell you now, either—not now. Our family wasn't ever in society, as Mrs. Skelton pretended—you knew that, of course, though—and I haven't been much of anything except a slave, and I've had a hard time, too, terrible," and she began dabbing her eyes. "I know I'm no good, last night proved it to me, that's a fact. But I hadn't meant to do you any harm even when I came alone that way—really I didn't. I pretended to be willing, that was all. Hear me out, Ed, anyhow. Please don't go yet. I thought I could signal you to run without them seeing me—really I did. When I first left you the door was locked, and I came back for that sole reason. I suppose they did something to it so I couldn't open it. There were others up there; they made me go back—I can't tell you how or why or who—but they were all about me—they always are. They're determined to get you, Ed, in one way or another, even if I don't help them, and I'm telling you you'd better look out for yourself. Please do. Go away from here. Don't have anything more to do with me. Don't have anything more to do with any of these people. I can't help myself, honestly I can't. I didn't want to, but—oh—" she wrung her hands and sat down wearily,

"you don't know how I'm placed with them, what it is—"

"Yes? Well, I'm tired of that stuff," Gregory now added grimly and unbelievably. "I suppose they told you to run back and tell me this so as to win my sympathy again? Oh, you little liar! You make me sick. What a sneak and a crook you really are!"

"Ed! Ed!" she now sobbed. "Please! Please! Won't you understand how it is? They have watched every entrance every time we've gone out since I came here. It doesn't make any difference which door you come through. They have men at every end. I didn't know anything about it until I went upstairs. Really, I didn't. Oh, I wish I could get out of all this! I'm so sick of it all. I told you that I'm fond of you, and I am. Oh, I'm almost crazy! I wish sometimes that I could die, I'm so sick of everything. My life's a shabby mess, and now you'll hate me all the time," and she rocked to and fro in a kind of misery, and cried silently as she did so.

Gregory stared at her, amazed but unbelieving.

"Yes," he insisted, "I know. The same old stuff, but I don't believe it. You're lying now, just as you have been—all along. You think by crying and pretending to feel sad that you might get another chance to trick me, but you won't. I'm out of this to-day, once and for all, and I'm through with you. There's no use in my appealing to the police under this administration, or I'd do that. But I want to tell you this. If you follow me any longer, or any of this bunch around here, I'm going to the newspapers. There'll be some way of getting this before the courts somewhere, and I'll try it. And if you really were on the level and wanted to do anything, there's a way, all right, but you wouldn't do it if you had a chance, never, not in a million years. I know you wouldn't."

"Oh, Ed! Ed! You don't know me, or how I feel, or what I'll do," she whimpered. "You haven't given me a chance. Why don't you suggest something, if you don't believe me, and see?"

"Well, I can do that easily enough," he replied sternly. "I can call that bluff here and now. Write me out a confession of all that's been going on here. Let me hear you dictate it to a stenographer, and then come with me to a notary public or the district attorney, and swear to it. Now we'll see just how much there is to this talk about caring for me," and he watched her closely, the while she looked at him, her eyes drying and her sobs ceasing. She seemed to pause emotionally and stare at the floor in a speculative, ruminative mood. "Yes? Well, that's different, isn't it? I see how it is now. You didn't think I'd have just the thing to call your bluff with, did you? And just as I thought, you won't do it. Well I'm on to you now, so good day. I have your measure at last. Good-by!" and he started off.

"Ed!" she called, jumping up suddenly and starting after him. "Ed! Wait—don't go! I'll do what you say. I'll do anything you want. You don't believe I will, but I will. I'm sick of this life, I really am. I don't care what they do to me now afterwards, but just the same I'll come. Please don't be so hard on me Ed. Can't you see—can't you see—Ed—how I feel about you? I'm crazy about you, I really am. I'm not all bad, Ed, really I'm not—can't you see that? Only—only—" and by now he had come back and was looking at her in an incredulous way. "I wish you cared for me a little, Ed. Do you, Ed, just a little? Can't you, if I do this?"

He looked at her with mingled astonishment, doubt, contempt, pity, and even affection, after its kind. Would she really do it? And if she did what could he offer her in the way of that affection which she craved? Nothing, he knew that. She could never extricate herself from this awful group by which she was surrounded, her past, the memory of the things she had tried to do to him, and he—he was married. He was happy with his wife really, and could make no return. There was his career, his future, his present position. But that past of hers—what was it? How could it be that people could control another person in this way she claimed,

especially scoundrels like these, and why wouldn't she tell him about it? What had she done that was so terrible as to give them this power? Even if he did care for her what chance would he have, presuming her faithfulness itself, to either confront or escape the horde of secret enemies that was besetting him and her just now? They would be discovered and paraded forth at their worst, all the details. That would make it impossible for him to come forth personally and make the charge which would constitute him champion of the people. No, no, no! But why, considering all her efforts against him, should she come to his rescue now, or by doing so expect him to do anything for her by way of return? He smiled at her dourly, a little sadly.

"Yes. Well, Imogene, I can't talk to you about that now, not for the present, anyhow. You're either one of the greatest actresses and crooks that ever lived, or you're a little light in the upper story.<sup>21</sup> At any rate, I should think that you might see that you could scarcely expect me to like you, let alone to love you, all things considered, and particularly since this other thing has not been straightened out. You may be lying right now, for all I know—acting, as usual. But even so—let's first see what you do about this other, and then talk."

He looked at her, then away over the sea to where some boats were coming towards them.

"Oh, Ed," she said sadly, observing his distracted gaze, "you'll never know how much I do care for you, although you know I must care a lot for you, to do this. It's the very worst thing I can do for me—the end, maybe, for me. But I wish you would try and like me a little, even if it were only for a little while."

"Well, Imogene, let's not talk about that now," he replied skeptically. "Not until we've attended to this other, anyhow. Certainly you owe me that much. You don't know what my life's been, either—one long up-hill fight. But you'd better come along with me just as you are, if you're coming. Don't go upstairs to get any hat—or to change your shoes."

"I'll get a car here and you can come with me just as you are."

She looked at him simply, directly, beatenly.

"All right, Ed, but I wish I knew how this is going to end. I can't come back here after this, you know, if they find it out. I know I owe this to you, but, oh dear, I'm such a fool! Women always are where love is concerned, and I told myself I'd never let myself get in love any more, and now look at me!"

They went off to the city together, to his office, to a notary, to the district attorney's office—a great triumph. She confessed all, or nearly so, how she had formerly been employed by Mr. Swayne; how she had met Mr. Tilney there; how, later, after Swayne had fled, Tilney had employed her in various capacities, secretary, amanuensis,<sup>22</sup> how she had come to look upon him as her protector; where and how she had met Mrs. Skelton, and how the latter, at Mr. Tilney's request (she was not sure, only it was an order, she said) had engaged—commanded, rather—her to do this work, though what the compulsion was she refused to say, reserving it for a later date. She was afraid, she said.

Once he had this document in his possession, Gregory was overjoyed, and still he was doubtful of her. She asked him what now, what more, and he requested her to leave him at once and to remain away for a time until he had time to think and decide what else he wished to do. There could be nothing between them, not even friendship, he reassured her, unless he was fully convinced at some time or other that no harm could come to him—his wife, his campaign, or anything else. Time was to be the great factor.

And yet two weeks later, due to a telephone message from her to his office for just one word, a few minutes, anywhere that he would suggest, they met again, this time merely for a moment, as he told himself and her. It was foolish, he shouldn't do it, but still— At this interview, somehow, Imogene managed to establish a claim on his emo-



tions which it was not easy to overcome. It was in one of the small side booths in the rather out-of-the-way Grill Parzan Restaurant in the great financial district. Protesting that it was only because she wished to see him just once more that she had done this, she had come here, she said, after having dropped instantly and completely out of the life at Triton Hall, not returning even for her wardrobe, as he understood it, and hiding away in an unpretentious quarter of the city until she could make up her mind what to do. She seemed, and said she was, much alone, distraught. She did not know what was to become of her now, what might befall her. Still, she was not so unhappy if only he would not think badly of her any more. He had to smile at her seemingly pathetic faith in what love might do for her. To think that love should turn a woman about like this! It was fascinating, and so sad. He was fond of her in a platonic way, he now told himself, quite sincerely so. Her interest in him was pleasing, even moving, "But what is it you expect of me?" he kept saying over and over. "You know we can't go on with this. There's 'the girl' and the kid. I won't do anything to harm them, and besides, the campaign is just beginning. Even this is ridiculously foolish of me. I'm taking my career in my hands. This lunch will have to be the last, I tell you."

"Well, Ed," she agreed wistfully, looking at him at the very close of the meal, "you have made up your mind, haven't you? Then you're not going to see me any more? You seem so distant, now that we're back in town. Do you feel so badly toward me, Ed? Am I really so bad?"

"Well, Imogene, you see for yourself how it is, don't you?" he went on. "It can't be. You are more or less identified with that old crowd, even though you don't want to be. They know things about you, you say, and they certainly wouldn't be slow to use them if they had any reason for so doing. Of course they don't know anything yet about this confession, unless you've told them, and I don't propose that they shall so long as I don't have to use it. As for me, I

have to think of my wife and kid, and I don't want to do anything to hurt them. If ever Emily found this out it would break her all up, and I don't want to do that. She's been too square, and we've gone through too much together. I've thought it all over, and I'm convinced that what I'm going to do is for the best. We have to separate, and I came here to-day to tell you that I can't see you any more. It can't be, Imogene, can't you see that?"

"Not even for a little while?"

"Not even for a day. It just can't be. I'm fond of you, and you've been a brick<sup>23</sup> to pull me out of this, but don't you see that it can't be? Don't you really see how it is?"

She looked at him, then at the table for a moment, and then out over the buildings of the great city.

"Oh, Ed," she reflected sadly, "I've been such a fool. I don't mean about the confession—I'm glad I did that—but just in regard to everything I've done. But you're right, Ed. I've felt all along that it would have to end this way, even the morning I agreed to make the confession. But I've been making myself hope against hope, just because from the very first day I saw you out there I thought I wouldn't be able to hold out against you, and now you see I haven't. Well, all right, Ed. Let's say good-by. Love's a sad old thing, isn't it?" and she began to put on her things.

He helped her, wondering over the strange whirl of circumstances which had brought them together and was now spinning them apart.

"I wish I could do something more for you, Imogene, I really do," he said. "I wish I could say something that would make it a little easier for you—for us both—but what would be the use? It wouldn't really, now would it?" "No," she replied brokenly.

He took her to the elevator and down to the sidewalk, and there they stopped for a moment.

"Well, Imogene," he began, and paused. "It's not just the way I'd like it to be, but—well—" he extended his hand—"here's luck and good-by, then." He turned to go.

She looked up at him pleadingly.

"Ed," she said, "Ed—wait! Aren't you—don't you want to?" she put up her lips, her eyes seemingly misty with emotion.

He came back and putting his arm about her, drew her upturned lips to his. As he did so she clung to him, seeming to vent a world of feeling in this their first and last kiss, and then turned and left him, never stopping to look back, and being quickly lost in the immense mass which was swirling by. As he turned to go through he observed two separate moving picture men with cameras taking the scene from different angles. He could scarcely believe his senses. As he gazed they stopped their work, slapped their tripods together and made for a waiting car. Before he could really collect his thoughts they were gone—and then—

"As I live!" he exclaimed. "She did do this to me after all, or did she? And after all my feeling for her!—and all her protestations! The little crook! And now they have that picture of me kissing her! Stung, by George! and by the same girl, or by them, and after all the other things I've avoided! That's intended to make that confession worthless! She did that because she's changed her mind about me! Or, she never did care for me." Grim, reducing thought! "Did she—could she—know—do a thing like that?" he wondered. "Is it she and Tilney, or just Tilney alone, who has been following me all this time?" He turned solemnly and helplessly away.

Now after all his career was in danger His wife had returned and all was seemingly well, but if he proceeded with his exposures as he must, then what? This picture would be produced! He would be disgraced! Or nearly so. Then what? He might charge fraud, a concocted picture,<sup>24</sup> produce the confession. But could he? Her arms had been about his neck! He had put his about her! Two different camera men had taken them from different angles! Could he explain that? Could he find Imogene again? Was it wise? Would she testify in his behalf? If so what good would

it do? Would any one, in politics at least, believe a morally victimized man? He doubted it. The laughter! The jesting! The contempt! No one except his wife, and she could not help him here.

Sick at heart and defeated he trudged on now clearly convinced that because of this one silly act of kindness all his work of months had been undone and that now, never, so sly were the opposing political forces, might he ever hope to enter the promised land of his better future—not here, at least—that future to which he had looked forward with so much hope—neither he nor his wife, nor child.

“Fool! Fool!” he exclaimed to himself heavily and then —“fool! fool!” Why had he been so ridiculously sympathetic and gullible? Why so unduly interested? but finding no answer and no clear way of escape save a denial and counter charges he made his way slowly on toward that now dreary office where so long he had worked, but where now, because of this he might possibly not be able to work, at least with any great profit to himself.

“Tilney! Imogene! The Triton!” he thought—what clever scoundrels those two were—or Tilney anyhow—he could not be sure of Imogene, even now, and so thinking, he left the great crowd at his own door, that crowd, witless, vast, which Tilney and the mayor and all the politicians were daily and hourly using—the same crowd which he had wished to help and against whom, as well as himself, this little plot had been hatched, and so easily and finally so successfully worked.

*Sam Elkin*

## THE WAY THINGS ARE

From the first day on after Henry Bruck came home he ran into everyone, it seemed, he had ever known and many he did not know. There had been a lot of things about him in the paper, and he had already received a call from Ed Thompson, the managing editor, telling him his old job was waiting. But that he was thinking about. He didn't want to see Ed Thompson just yet. He wanted to think about that for a while. There was plenty of time to reason things out now.

He did a great deal of walking. The doctor in the hospital told him he would have to learn to use his right leg all over again. Walking would fill it out again. Strengthen the muscles and bones and keep the blood circulating normally. But he found out that with walking came a lot of talking because so many people seemed to know him or know of him. And so many people asked questions he could not answer. And it seemed ridiculous that he could not answer them when they asked: "What was the toughest fight you were in?"

He stood looking at them, knowing they expected him to say Kasserine Pass, or Salerno, or Cassino, where it had finally happened. He knew they expected him to name places they had read about in the papers. But how could he tell them that he disliked saying those places?

During these conversations someone invariably asked: "How did it feel getting hit?"

"I don't really know," he said.

"You don't know?" they said. They smiled. "You mean you caught some steel and you don't know what it felt like?"

He looked at them.

"Didn't it hurt?"

"Yes."

They shook their heads.

"Afterwards," he said. "That is when the pain came back again in the hospital."

"Oh. I see what you mean," they said. "I guess it's like breaking a leg or an arm. You feel the pain after it happens. Say, there's a cousin of mine..."

"That's it," he said quickly. "Look. I just remembered. I've got an appointment at the paper. They're waiting for me. I'm sorry. See you again. Good-by. Good-by. Good-by." And he left them in the street, they, no doubt, wondering if he was all there<sup>1</sup> and he wondering why the words to say his feelings were so cluttered, why it seemed clear running through his head and why, when he tried to explain how it was, it came out and sounded ridiculously stupid.

It wasn't that he didn't want to tell them, either. Because sometimes in remembering the things that had happened he wasn't at all too sure they had happened that way. During the long tiresome months in hospitals he tried writing about it, but he never could seem to get started. He would think too much about *how* to write it down instead of letting it come out by itself. Talking about it with others in the hospital wasn't much good, either. Everybody joked about how it happened to them, which was the best thing. But once in a while you got serious and talked about it, and then too many lies crept in and you got disgusted lying about it. It got so *easy* to lie about it. You didn't mean to, but you did. And after a while you got so you couldn't remember what was truth and what wasn't any more.

His friends decided, then, that Henry Bruck was bitter.

And they decided he should not be that way. They remembered that long before the war, when he had just entered the army, he had written stories for the newspaper. And they remembered that his stories had always been trim and tight. Unspouting.<sup>2</sup> They remembered the things he had said about the training for war. They remembered there had been very little humor in what he wrote. They said of him then that he was too serious. Couldn't he see the funny side of it all? Others were doing so. Did he have to make it sound as though America would be in the war the very next day?

Where he lived they began to discuss him as they would a new tenant in the neighborhood. They did not speak to him any more, but they watched as he passed by in the street, limping along with a cane in his right hand, a thin young man with deep lines running across his forehead and around the corners of his lips and eyes.

The way they saw him now was not the way they remembered him. They saw him now, still a young man, but with something older, something quieter, something buried in his face and eyes. It would be easy for them to say that the war had done it and let it go that way. But *what* of the war had done that to him? This they did not know. They only knew that he had changed from a boy running and playing baseball in the summer and football in the autumn and basketball in the winter into a man they could not speak to.

Henry Bruck they now watched silently. But his wife, when she came into the grocery store or the butcher store, they spoke to her of him.

"How is Hank feeling today?" they asked.

Ruth, who knew why they asked and deeply resented their asking, answered plainly and pointedly: "He's fine. He's never felt better in his life."

She spoke so slowly saying that, her tone carrying such deep conviction, that they did not ask her any further questions. And soon they asked her nothing at all because they eventually came around to saying amongst themselves that she, too, had become bitter and that she should not be that

way, either, because she was not the only one who had had a husband badly injured in the war. At least her husband was home and now he was out of the army and he would never fight again and, though he would never walk as well as before, he was *alive* and *able* to walk and talk and eat and sleep, and besides she would see him every day now, not as before it was true, but she would have him near her, and after all that was the important thing, wasn't it?

Henry Bruck was feeling his way slowly, trying to get the inside of himself into the feeling of being home. Long before he had gone into the army, and even afterwards, in the hospital, when he had talked with others about returning into civilian life, everyone had agreed that the change could be done like a snap of the fingers. It would be no trouble at all, they used to say. Just give me the chance. That's all I ask.

Now he wasn't too sure. Mostly there were small things. Like talking with people in the street. Like his wife telling him one day about Mr. Jameson, who had died only a short three weeks before he came home. He had shown no surprise, no concern, and it was so noticeable that Ruth thought he had not heard.

"Mr. Jameson, Hank," she repeated. "You remember him.

"Sure," Hank said.

"Hank?"

"Yes?"

She paused. "I don't know," she said.

Hank spoke slowly. "What are you talking about, Ruth?"

"I don't know, Hank."

He saw the hurt in her eyes and he realized what she must be thinking and he laughed and told her not to be silly. But that didn't change his feelings. Mr. Jameson's death didn't bother him. There was a time when it would because Mr. Jameson had been a friend. But now Mr. Jameson's death seemed like nothing at all. Mr. Jameson had died quietly.

\* \* \*



It was a Sunday morning and they went into the city early. Before lunch they strolled around Rockefeller Plaza. They stopped at the rink and watched the skaters below for a while. Later they ate in Longchamps on Fortieth and Seventh Avenue. After lunch they decided to go to the Museum of Modern Arts up in the Fifties.

It was a cold day. The sun was weak. The sky was clear. From Longchamps they walked up to Fifth Avenue, turned left toward Fifty-third Street. Fifth Avenue was wind-swept and clean. Everything looked smart and clean. The women were beautifully dressed. Watching them strut along made Hank feel better than he had felt in a long time. It was pretty much the way he had pictured it along Fifth Avenue on a clear cold sunny winter's day.

He held Ruth's arm close to him. Every now and then he would look at her and smile. And shake his head from side to side.

"You don't have to take a back seat to any of them," he'd say. Or: "you're beautiful, Ruth. Beautiful."

Hank could feel himself unfolding as they walked. And stopped to look in the store windows. And walked on again. He liked the feeling of stopping and looking in the store windows, particularly the women's stores, and commenting on some clothes and how they would look on his wife.

"There's something, Ruth. Why don't you buy it?... Now how about *that*?... Match your eyes.... your hair.... your nose.... Buy a dozen of these, Ruth.... two dozen.... To hell with the dough."<sup>3</sup>

Henry Bruck was breathing more deeply. Coming alive again. It was good. It was very, very good.

At the museum Hank liked the paintings. He had never bothered much with paintings before but he found them interesting. He liked the atmosphere. He liked, also, the way people strolled casually through the winding halls, talking softly, pausing, staring, and moving on again.

After the museum they decided to go to Lindy's. There the crowd and the noise and the coming into the warmth

out of the cold stretched the feeling he had had walking on Fifth Avenue. He was very hungry, too.

"Blintzes<sup>4</sup> with sour cream, that's what I want," Hank said to the waiter. "Also some cheesecake and milk."

"Anything else?" Ruth said.

"Herring and onions."

Ruth started to laugh. "Oh, no, Hank. Please."

"You order some, too."

"I couldn't."

"I'll order it for you."

He did, and both of them had herring and onions. After they finished they began blowing in each other's faces<sup>5</sup> and Hank said to hell with the people we'll sit next to in the theater.

But after Lindy's, and just before he bought tickets for a musical,<sup>6</sup> Ruth said she didn't feel too well and Hank said it was her imagination. It certainly couldn't be the onions. But Ruth insisted that they go home and when Hank looked at her he had to laugh and Ruth did a good job of blushing. Besides, Hank was beginning to feel tired.

"I can't explain it," Hank said.

Ruth, sitting beside him on the couch, looked down at her hands in her lap. Now she thought. This is the time. I must do it now.

"I don't want to antagonize anybody," Hank said. "It's just that I can't stand their questions."

"Forgive me, Hank. But you *have* changed."

He turned to his wife and shook his head. "That's a silly thing to say. Of course I've changed. Who hasn't? Is anybody expected not to change in a war?"

"I don't mean that, Hank."

Well, what *do* you mean? he thought. He moved his body back against the arm of the couch, pulling his left leg up on the cushions. Now he was facing his wife.

"What I mean is this," Ruth said. She reached beside her

and pulled some sheets of folded paper out of an old, withered envelope.

"One of those love letters I wrote you for publication?" Hank said.

Ruth could not help smiling at that and Hank laughed and then they both laughed for a moment. Then she said: "This is a letter you wrote me just before you went overseas." She glanced through the writing quickly, then: "I'll read the part that's pertinent."

Hank shook his head slowly from side to side as he gazed through his wife. Ruth saw him shaking his head. She said: "Don't you want me to read it, Hank?"

"No, no. Go on. I was just thinking."

"What, Hank?"

For a moment he was silent. Then: "Nothing."

"Please, Hank."

"It really wasn't anything."

"Sometimes you make me feel so unnecessary."

There was a note of sadness rather than anger or bitterness in her voice. It swept into him like a sudden stab of pain.

"God, no Ruth. Don't say a thing like that."

"Perhaps you don't mean it, Hank. But that's how you make me feel."

"Now, Ruth," he said "You know better..." He paused as he saw the coldness in her eyes. "What's wrong, Ruth?"

She did not answer. He smiled in confusion.

"One of the reasons I fell in love with you," she said, "was because of the strong belief you had in people."

Hank began to smile, but stopped as he saw how serious she was. "You're being very silly," he said.

"Am I? Do you deny you've lost your faith, your belief, your feelings about people?"

Hank sat back straight. "Are you serious?" he said.

"Hank, I don't know about you any more."

For the first time a flush came into his cheeks. "Stop talking like a child," he said.

"Hank, you shy away from people. You don't want to talk to them. Sometimes I feel you resent them."

His tone was sarcastic as he said: "Why don't you read all the experts on how to treat the returning soldier?"

"Just a few minutes ago you said you couldn't stand the questions people ask."

"Well, I can't."

"Is it because they won't understand?"

"Well, they won't."

"Is it necessary?"

Hank did not answer. The twinge of ugly irritation was turning into anger because of the cross-examination. He decided not to say anything at all. But Ruth dug swiftly into his silence: "Is it necessary for people to understand what you went through before you'll treat them like people? Or"—and her voice became heavily sarcastic—"do you also believe that America should have been bombed so that..."

"Goddamnit, what the hell's the matter with you?"

Ruth's eyes were slightly red. As she watched the anger begin to seep out of his face and eyes she also saw, with sinking heart, the sudden tightening around the corners of his lips and she lowered her head on her chest, her eyes on the letter in her lap. She heard Hank turn and then she heard him putting on his coat and walk to the umbrella rack in the hall for his cane. She did not look up, even when she heard the door slam. She sat for a long time with her eyes on the letter in her lap. Her eyes were red and her lips were pulled slightly together. And after a while she put the letter lying in her lap back in the envelope.

Oratanum hadn't changed much. You walked down the Main Street of stores that lined both sides of the narrow street like houses of prostitution. There were no ugly gashes in the building structure. No rubble lay piled up in the streets. There was the atmosphere of living in the stores and buildings. Normal living, though somewhat accelerated and

tedious as far as Hank was concerned. Many years ago he had worked in some of the stores as a salesman or a stock clerk,<sup>7</sup> and both jobs, or any job in a store, had always struck him as foul, boring work.

He got as far as the Oratanum Library and began to feel tired. On the corner of the street, in front of the thorn bushes which surrounded the library, were three or four cement benches with wooden seats and backs for people waiting for buses. An old woman sat on one bench with some bundles in her hands. Hank went over to the first bench nearest the corner and sat down. He glanced around at the old, dark, brownstone, vinesmothered<sup>8</sup> library and thought about going in to see Miss Sarah Freedom. He wondered if she had changed much. He smiled, thinking about her. . . . remembering the many hours he had spent in the library, the writing he had done there in the dead, stale quiet of the library silence. He remembered walking between the aisles<sup>9</sup> of books and looking at the names of the writers, and taking the books in his hands, and glancing through the pages at the neatly typed words and feeling a strange kind of sadness at seeing so many words and knowing and understanding how much the writer must have felt in the writing, and then, sighing, he'd put the books back on their shelves and stand back and gaze, a little forlornly, at the row upon row of books. . . . God, it was a feeling he hadn't had in so very long. And now he thought it would be good just to have that feeling once again, to go into the library and talk to Miss Sarah Freedom.

He turned back to the street again, his gaze running up Tandem Street, which crossed Main. From where he sat he could just about see the editorial entrance of the *Oratanum Daily*. He would go up there first and then to the library. Right now he would sit here and rest.

He reached into his pocket for a cigarette, took one out and lit it. Over to his right, up the main street, he could see the marqu  e<sup>10</sup> of the Oratanum Theater. On the marquee, in large white letters, were the words: LONDON RAID.<sup>11</sup>

He turned his eyes to the street again. What had happened to Ruth? He had never expected such talk from her. He shook his head and sighed. Maybe he'd been a bit too rough. No. Maybe she needed it. What kind of nonsense was that? Did he believe America should have been bombed? That kind of talk from soldiers had always made him laugh. When soldiers said it to him he used to tell them that maybe those bombs would fall on their own homes, their fathers, or mothers, or wives. And then they used to say, well, don't let it fall on anyone. Just out in the fields somewhere, to let people know what falling bombs sound like. He took a deep puff on the cigarette. That was all right from them, but not from Ruth.

He watched the people walking calmly through the streets. He saw a young couple strolling toward the theater and he saw the boy look up at the marquee, then turn and say something to the girl. She shook her head, and they stopped a moment, then the boy pulled her by the arm and they continued toward the theater.

He thought of Ruth. A cold sweat on his forehead. And Ruth, too. Now a sick and ugly flutter in the pit of his stomach and all of it beginning to clear as a voice penetrated his mind and he opened his eyes and saw Charley Peterson, City Editor of the *Oratanum Daily*.

"Hank, for crying out loud! How are you?" Charley said.

Hank blinked. He sat up and squeezed his eyelids together, then opened them again and said: "Hello, Charley."

Charley Peterson sat down beside him on the bench. "Boy," he said, "you were deep in thought there, Hank. Had to call you three times before you came out of it."

Hank sighed. "I guess I was thinking," he said.

"I guess you were. How are you, Hank?"

"Fine."

"It's good to see you."

Hank smiled. "I was going up to the office this afternoon. Thompson in?"

"Sure. He'll be glad to see you. Are you coming back?"

"I don't know yet."

"We can use you, Hank. Anytime you say."

"I was just resting," Hank said. "I was going up to see Thompson after I rested."

"How's the leg?"

"O.K. You going to the office?"

"Yes."

"I'll come along."

The editorial office of the *Oratanum Daily* was as dirty as it had ever been. Papers, torn and crumpled and unused sheets, were strewn all over the floor. There was much clattering of typewriters and moving around and phones ringing and the muffled sound from the two teletype machines in the glass-enclosed room over in a corner.

There were new faces he had never seen before. But everybody looked at him as though he were not a stranger. Three or four people he knew came over and shook hands with him and were glad to see him back and how was he getting along?

Charley said he'd be right back, and in a few minutes Ed Thompson came out of his office, big, heavy, wide face and bright blue watery eyes, holding his hand out, grinning.

"Goddamnit, Hank! How the hell are you?"

Hank smiled.

"Good to see you," Ed Thompson said.

Hank shook hands.

Ed Thompson took him by the arm and directed him to the office he used which was situated just off the main editorial room. Inside, Hank sat down in a soft chair the other side of Thompson's desk. Thompson shut the door. Suddenly, Hank began to feel a little uneasy. He wasn't sure why. His legs were still trembling slightly from before. But it wasn't that.

Ed Thompson went around the desk and sat down in his chair. He placed his feet, crossed, up on the desk. He held out a pack of cigarettes, but Hank shook his head.

"Cut down on smoking?" Ed Thompson said.

"Some. I just threw one away."

Hank placed his cane across his lap and sat back. He still felt uneasy, but it wasn't as strong now. Why should he feel it at all? Thompson? That was silly. Thompson couldn't make him do anything he didn't want to do. No. That wasn't it at all. Maybe Thompson, but not the other thing. He kept his eyes on the papers on Thompson's desk.

"How's the leg, Hank?"

Hank glanced up. Smiled. "Not bad. It's coming along."

"Good." Ed Thompson sighed and placed his hands behind his head, leaving the burning cigarette dangling from his lips. And just then Hank knew that Ed Thompson would say: "I guess you want your old job back." He was already shaking his head, but he did not realize it until he saw Ed Thompson's face change into a look of surprise. Then he saw Thompson draw his feet slowly off the desk, settle them on the floor, and come forward in the chair with his body, both hands grasping the arms of the chair firmly. Now Ed Thompson spoke in an astonished, inquiring way: "NO?"

Hank felt the silence that had swept into the room. All at once he understood why he had not rushed back here in the beginning. He realized now why he had wanted to think about it first.

"I didn't come back here for my old job," he said.

Ed Thompson's face was wide and open. He stared at Hank across the desk. Then he took a deep puff on his cigarette, took the cigarette out of his mouth, and settled back in his chair.

"We can put you in," he said. He paused, and then a half-pleading, half-impatient tone came into his voice: "God-damnit, Hank, I was counting on you to handle 'all military news. Maybe even a column."<sup>12</sup>



"I didn't come back for my *old* job," Hank said.

Suddenly Ed Thompson smiled. "Oh!" he said and laughed. "I didn't get you at first. Of course, I don't mean *old* job. Now this column I've got. . ."

But Hank was shaking his head again as he heard and saw Ed Thompson's words fading away into the surprised look again. Thompson stopped talking. He stared at Hank for a long moment. "What goes?" he said.

Hank was still shaking his head, very slowly now. And though his eyes were on the papers on Thompson's desk, he did not see them. Instead, he saw himself sitting on the bench outside the library, seeing and feeling again the bombs falling on the streets of Oratanum. And then, with a sudden shock, he recalled Ruth's words and he realized that, subconsciously, for a long time he had been thinking about bombs falling on America, on American homes and American people, so that they'd understand something about war. That thought drove into him so violently that he jerked his head up, his eyes widened and stared directly into Ed Thompson's eyes. Thompson recoiled into his chair, then half rose, but Hank held his hand out and said: "Wait a minute, Ed. Wait a minute."

Ed Thompson settled slowly back into his chair. He came forward, however, and sat like a man ready to leap.

"I'm sorry," Hank said. "I just thought of something. Something just occurred to me."

"You all right, Hank?"

"Yes, yes, I'm all right. I wish everybody would stop asking me how I feel. I feel all right. Look, Ed." He leaned over slightly. His eyes shifted from Ed Thompson's face to the window behind him. He gazed out over the roof of the printing plant to the buildings that ran along Main Street. "What I meant by not wanting my old job back again was this." He spoke slowly, laboriously. It was as though he were trying to remember words and phrases he had memorized a long time ago. "The old job wasn't any good," he said. "It didn't prepare me for what had to be done. It didn't

hold up for me when I went into combat." He paused and moved his glance back to Thompson's face. "Do you understand?"

Ed Thompson shook his head.

"No," Hank said. "Now look. There was a lieutenant who came into our outfit just before we moved into combat. That was bad to begin with. This guy used to spout off a lot about fighting for God and country, for right against wrong, for the home, the family, the good old days, the old corner drugstore. Listen, Ed," Hank said, his cheeks reddening. "The bastard used to carry those Nash-Kelvinator<sup>13</sup> magazine advertisements around with him. We'd always catch him reading those things. They were like his Bible. He talked big and talked a lot and made everybody in the outfit jittery because he was an eager boy, a stupid eager sonofabitch, and it was his stupidity that caused our whole company to be almost wiped out." Hank paused and began to shake his head again, his eyes lowering to the papers on the desk. "He didn't deserve to live. I'm glad they killed him. He was a murderer." His voice seemed to fade away into the room, and once again he looked up into Ed Thompson's face. "You don't understand, do you?" he said. And before Ed Thompson could do or say anything: "No, you don't. How can you?" He edged forward in his chair. He held the cane tightly in his hands. I understand what I'm saying, he thought. It's so clear to me. I've got to make him understand, he thought. Suddenly, that seemed the most important thing he'd ever had to do. And, somehow, Ruth entered into the room and stood beside him. And behind Ed Thompson, floating into the room through the windowpane, came some of the faces that grinned, some that were twisted, some that just looked. And then he said in a voice that seemed to ring in his ears: "Years ago on this paper, I wrote a story of a high-school football game." His voice was certain now. "There was a Negro boy on one of those high-school teams. That day the kid stole the show.<sup>14</sup> He was easily the best player on either team. I wrote my story around him. I pointed

out what he had done, how fast he had been, how he had run rings around everybody. When I brought that story in here you said to me we don't play up 'niggers' on this paper."

Hank paused and saw Thompson's expression change slightly. He felt the sweat coming out all over his body. It wasn't that he was afraid of what he was saying. It was, rather, that he was finally saying the words that had been lying inside him for so very long.

Ed Thompson was shaking his head again, but not from any lack of understanding. Hank continued, quickly now: "And then, later, there was the airport strike. That you'll also remember, Ed. You knew, and I knew, and everybody knew that the management was wrong. And yet that story was changed, too."

This time Ed Thompson came forward in his chair. "Hold on, Hank," he said. "I couldn't help that. Rand was the one who changed it. Not me."

"I know Rand changed it. But that was all the more reason why that story should have appeared the way it was written. The way things actually were."

"Hank, you're not talking sense."

Hank smiled for the first time since he had entered Thompson's office. "I'd expect you to say that, Ed. Now look. I was as much to blame as you. I let you change the Negro story. And I said nothing about the strike story. So it was my fault, too. But if there's one thing I learned in this war it's this—I'm not talking that kind of sense any more. It was just that kind of sense you're talking about that helped get us into a war. It's just that kind of sense that's wrapped up in the old job. In all the old jobs full of old ideas, and old stupid hatreds, and rotten old principles." Hank settled back, and his eyes were staring into Ed Thompson's eyes. And his voice lowered almost to a whisper, yet it seemed to fill the room like a voice in a huge, empty hall. "I didn't have an easy time in this war. Neither did many others like me. But this war did something for me.

For me this war was like a great big physic " It cleaned me out. And I intend to stay clean."

Ruth was no longer beside him. And the faces had floated out of the room. And Ed Thompson was smiling. Hank saw him smiling. And it was not a smile of humor. Yes, it was. Humor, but with something else, too. It was as though Ed Thompson had just witnessed an embarrassing incident and didn't know whether to laugh or keep a straight face. That smile annoyed Hank. It seemed to him that Thompson was laughing, politely. And then he was certain as he heard Thompson say: "You're taking this war mighty seriously, aren't you?"

There was an abrupt moment of dead silence in the room.

"What I mean," Ed Thompson said hastily, "is that I—I can understand the way..."

"Jesus!"

"...you—I understand the way you feel, Hank. God-damnit, Hank, all that stuff on racial equality—I agree with you. Sure. I admit I was wrong about the football thing. O.K., I..." he paused and could not seem to go on.

Hank sat forward in his chair and kept looking Ed Thompson in the eyes. Then he said: "I was fighting for something you're not ready to understand."

Ed Thompson did not answer. Nor did he seem *able* to answer. He looked incapable even of thought. His expression was blank and embarrassed, without humor now, and instead, the touch of fear had entered his eyes. And the way he sat, the look on his face, suddenly reminded Hank of an Italian newspaperman, an editor, whom he had seen dragged through the streets of Naples after the Germans had been thrown out of the Italian port. The newspaperman had been a collaborator<sup>16</sup> and had, finally, come into the hands of the people. Thompson's look was not the weakened, frightened look the Italian had, but it could turn into that. It could very easily turn into that.

I was fighting for something you're not ready to understand, Hank thought. What a stupid thing to say! It was

not a matter of his being *ready* to understand. Thompson understood. Hank saw that now. Thompson had made his decision. It wasn't hard and fast. It depended on how things were going. Thompson understood perfectly well. I was fighting for something. Jesus!

"You're not ready to understand," Hank said. "What the hell am I talking about? You know what you want, Ed. You know Goddamned well what you want." He stood up. There was no other sound in the room except the moving sound of his body rising and walking toward the door. When he reached the door, and just before he opened it, he turned around and said in a slow quiet voice. "It's O.K. Everything is good, Ed. *Now* everything is good."

Hank opened the door and went out of the office, shutting the door softly behind him.

*Alan Max*

## LOYAL MISS FERCH

Little Miss Ferch was filing letters—she had worked over the filing cabinets in this same government bureau for thirty years—when the messenger brought her the memorandum. All it said was:

“Margaret Ferch  
“Filing Department  
“See Mr. Riggs in Room 402 at 3 o'clock.”

“Who is Mr. Riggs?” Margaret asked of tall, angular Betty Gimple who worked beside her and who was a virtual newcomer in the government, having been in the department for only thirteen years.

Betty Gimple thought for a moment as she deftly went on with her filing “Isn't he in charge of the Loyalty Committee?” she said. “Whatever can he want?”

Little Miss Ferch replied with a shrug of her shoulders and inserted a Massachusetts division letter into the Massachusetts division folder. A summons from the Loyalty Committee might have worried some of the women in the department but not Margaret Ferch. The setting up of the Loyalty Committee system several months before had concerned Miss Ferch not at all. She had come from Idaho to work in the government as a young girl of twenty-three. She had seen administrations come and go, executive orders

announced and later supplanted by new orders. Conservative or liberal administrations were all the same to Miss Ferch: they made no change in the procedure of filing letters. As for the Loyalty Order, that was all right with her—she was for loyalty, all right; it bothered her no more than an announcement of a new consul to Madagascar. When during the first weeks of Executive Order there was a wave of dismissals of men and women who had belonged to anti-fascist organizations or made contributions to them, little Miss Ferch had taken it in her stride.<sup>2</sup> After all, no one compelled anybody to work for the government and if the government said you shouldn't belong to organizations and you wanted to anyway, then you should work somewhere else where they didn't mind. It was as simple as that.

So there was no reason to give Mr. Riggs another thought until three o'clock. Meanwhile there were other things to think about: the neuritis in her leg that had plagued her for the past year and the warm sunny thought that in eleven more months she would be eligible to retire on a pension and return to Idaho and stay off her feet forever.

At exactly five minutes before three, Miss Ferch showed the memorandum to Mrs. Gearheart, her supervisor—she didn't notice the startled look on Mrs. Gearheart's plump face—and took the elevator down to the fourth floor.

At the door of room 402, Miss Ferch patted her gray hair into place and entered. She held out the memorandum to the pretty, red-cheeked secretary—she's practically a child, thought Miss Ferch—and was ushered into Mr. Riggs' office.

"Sit down, Miss Ferch," said Mr. Riggs in a thoroughly executive voice, although the eyes that peered at her through rimless glasses were more jumpy than executive.

Miss Ferch sat down and thought how very comfortable indeed it was to be sitting in the middle of the afternoon.

Mr. Riggs cleared his voice as if he were about to address a joint session of Congress. "Loyalty is a very important thing, Miss Ferch," he said.

Little Miss Ferch nodded agreement—she had never given the matter much thought before but after all loyalty was *his* work just as filing was hers.

Mr. Riggs lifted a card from his desk and looked at it. "Your own record is very good, Miss Ferch," he said. Miss Ferch nodded again.

But had she observed any hint of disloyalty among her co-workers, Mr. Riggs inquired? Any remarks indicating that someone was not a hundred percent for our government?

Miss Ferch searched her memory. It was blank.

"No," she said. "There is nothing I can remember."

"I'm sure you'll keep your eyes, and ears open and let us hear if you notice anything. Thank you, Miss Ferch, that will be all." And he stared out the window at the building across the way where one Peter Gainor, head of the US Loyalty Committee of *that* bureau, was chalking up an enviable record of dismissals.

Margaret returned to the filing room and resumed her work. Betty Gimple, busy four filing cabinets away, edged over to her.

"Are you in trouble?" she asked.

Margaret giggled. "Me? Oh, dear, no." She promptly forgot all about Mr. Riggs until one afternoon two weeks later when she received another note to report to the chairman of the Loyalty Committee. With a start Margaret realized that she had kept neither eyes nor ears open since her last interview with Mr. Riggs. On the way down in the elevator she tried to recall some scrap of overheard conversation that might be of value to the Loyalty Committee. But she could recall nothing.

"Good afternoon, Miss Ferch," said Mr. Riggs. "Any news for us?"

Margaret said she was sorry but she didn't have any.



"That is too bad," said Mr. Riggs in the pained voice with which he imagined a President must reproach a special envoy returning from an unsuccessful mission to Europe.

Margaret tried to explain that she didn't know many people—she didn't get around much.

But there were twenty-five workers in her own department, Mr. Riggs reminded her, and she undoubtedly mingled with hundreds more every day in the cafeteria in the basement.

Miss Ferch felt her throat tighten—like the time Mrs. Gearheart had called her down after she had filed correspondence from Springfield, III, in the folder for Springfield, Mass.<sup>3</sup>

"A truly loyal employee," went on Mr. Riggs, tapping his desk with a pencil, "does not merely refrain from disloyal actions—he or she, as the case may be, also makes it difficult for others to be disloyal. Loyalty is not only passive—it is active as well," he continued, wondering how the phrase would sound over a national hookup.<sup>4</sup>

"I see," said Miss Ferch and she regretted inwardly that Mr. Riggs had neglected to make things clear to her at the first interview.

"On the other hand," Mr. Riggs went on, "disloyalty is not only active—it can be passive too—as when an employee, although apparently completely loyal himself or herself, as the case may be, will be tolerant of the disloyalty of others through a false sense of camaraderie." (An apt word, Mr. Riggs thought, but it would escape millions of radio listeners, especially west of the Mississippi—he would have to find a good American equivalent.)

It suddenly dawned on Miss Ferch that she was in danger—danger of being regarded as disloyal and of losing her pension. The breath seemed to leave her body.

"I trust that you will be more attentive to what goes on around you between now and our next interview," Mr. Riggs said.

Margaret nodded and fled upstairs to the filing room.

"Anything wrong?" Betty Gimple inquired when she noticed the drawn look on Margaret's face with its cobweb of tiny wrinkles. Miss Ferch didn't reply.

\* \*

During the next few days she worked in an entirely new way for her. Her filing was done with only half her mind—the other half was concentrated on the doings of the other women in the office. She observed who spoke to whom and, careful not to make herself conspicuous, moved around to pick up fragments of conversation. At lunch in the cafeteria, she sat down at the most crowded table—even breaking her many years' habit of trying to avoid the company of men. She studiously neglected to buy dessert with the rest of her meal in order to have an excuse to get on line<sup>5</sup> all over again and finish her lunch with a new group of employees at another table.

But the conversations were always innocent enough—although whether deliberately so or not, Miss Ferch was never sure. The topics rarely ranged beyond the latest moving picture, a sale<sup>6</sup> at a department store, the oppressive Washington heat and, among the men, the pathetic showing of the Washington Senators—the baseball team, that is.

In her chintz-curtained bedroom in the brick boarding house on R. Street, Miss Ferch tossed on her bed at night, examining the conversations of the day. In her mind, she went over a list of all her acquaintances to see if any of them had ever dropped a hint of a double life. In one of these sessions with herself she thought of the angular Betty Gimple and of Betty's inquiries immediately after her two meetings with Mr. Riggs. Was this simple friendliness? Was it artless curiosity? Or—Margaret stared into the darkness—was it possible that Betty Gimple had some special reason for wanting to know what happened in the office of the Loyalty Committee?

The next day Margaret managed to sit beside Betty Gimple at the cafeteria. But nothing happened. Any day now

Mr. Riggs would be calling Miss Ferch in again. She could not wait for things to take their normal course, she decided. She must attempt to draw out Betty Gimple—it was like laying a trap, she admitted to herself, but if Betty was innocent no harm would be done.

At lunch the following day, Margaret suddenly said to Betty: "All you read about in the papers is Russia."

"Yes," said Betty Gimple.

Little Miss Ferch nerved herself for the decisive thrust. "I wonder if Russia is as bad as she is painted," she said.

There was a pause while Betty Gimple put a piece of bread in her mouth. Suddenly Betty pointed to a pretty woman carrying a tray.

"Isn't that a cute<sup>7</sup> dress on Lottie While?" she exclaimed.

With a feeling of frustration, Margaret returned to the cream cheese and jelly sandwich.

The next afternoon it was Betty Gimple's turn to receive a memorandum asking her to appear at Mr. Riggs' office.

"Sit down, Miss Gimple," said Mr. Riggs when Betty stood before him. Mr. Riggs looked at the building across the street where Pete Gaimor had uncovered three disloyal workers the previous week, to Mr. Riggs' one. "Loyalty is a very important thing, Miss Gimple," he went on.

"Oh, very," agreed Miss Gimple.

Mr. Riggs lifted a card from his desk and peered at it. "Your own record is very good, Miss Gimple," he continued. But had she observed any hint of disloyalty among her co-workers? Any remarks indicating that someone was not a hundred percent for our government?

"Oh, no," Betty replied. Then she suddenly thought of the remark by Miss Ferch the day before at lunch. But was that the kind of thing that Mr. Riggs was interested in? And wouldn't it be like telling tales?

"Nothing at all?" Mr. Riggs pressed. And before she knew what she was saying, Miss Gimple asked: "If someone said she wondered if Russia was as bad as it's painted in the papers, would that..."

Mr. Riggs leaned toward her, his brown eyes sparkling, his right ear twitching slightly with excitement.

"Exactly, Miss Gimple, exactly," he said. "Be so good as to give me the name of the person who --"

Miss Gimple bit her lip. Tears welled in her eyes. She hadn't meant to get into anything like this.

"Come, come, Miss Gimple," Mr. Riggs went on, trying to fix his jumpy eyes on hers. "I am merely asking you for information which may be of extreme value to your government."

"It was Margaret Ferch," whispered Betty.

Mr. Riggs looked surprised. "Thank you very much, Miss Gimple," he said.

"But I'm sure she didn't mean anything by it," protested Betty.

"Thank you very much, Miss Gimple," Mr. Riggs repeated, and stood up like a President ending a press conference.

Betty Gimple felt sick and ashamed as she went upstairs in the elevator. When she reached the filing room she avoided Miss Ferch's eyes.

An hour later Mr. Riggs was saying "Sit down, Miss Ferch," to a very frightened Miss Ferch. This time Mr. Riggs was not alone; he was flanked by a short, stout middle-aged man on his left and by a thin elderly woman on his right.

"We understand that you feel that our American press is not treating Russia fairly," said Mr. Riggs in an over-kindly voice.

The conversation with Betty Gimple in the cafeteria flashed across Margaret's mind as her fingernails dug into the flesh of her palms. "Oh, no!" she cried. "It was Betty Gimple who told you that!"

"Names do not matter, Miss Ferch," said Mr. Riggs sweetly. "We are interested only in your views on the subject."

Miss Ferch tried to explain that she had been attempting to draw out Betty Gimple. "You asked me to find out what others were saying and thinking," she said.

"To be sure," said Mr. Riggs. "But we are also interested, naturally, in what *you* are saying and thinking." Whereupon the members of the committee questioned Miss Ferch for three-quarters of an hour.

"Thank you, Miss Ferch," Mr. Riggs said as the questioning ended. When Miss Ferch had left, the stout man said to Mr. Riggs: "Well, what do you think, Walter?"

Mr. Riggs cleared his throat. "It is hard to tell. . . really have been trying to draw out<sup>8</sup> Miss Gimple as she claims. On the other hand, this may be just an alibi. It is also difficult to tell whether her nervous manner is the result of guilt or innocent fear. In fact, there is no way we can be certain."

The other members of the committee nodded.

"The question, in my opinion," went on Mr. Riggs, feeling very much like a chief justice of the United States Supreme Court and looking out of the corner of his eye at Pete Gainor's office across the street, "is not one of guilt or innocence, but whether in these times the government can afford to have in its employ a person of questionable views. In a case of this kind, it is my opinion that the government must receive the benefit of the doubt."<sup>9</sup>

The next day the people in the filing department wondered what had become of Miss Ferch.

*Mike Quin*

## THE SACRED THING

He entered the house shaking his head and smacking his tongue. His round little eyes had a look of worried guilt. He hung his cap and his club and his uniform coat on the rack in the hall. From the kitchen came his wife's voice: "Is it you, Mike?"

Without troubling to answer, he entered the dining room unbuckling his revolver. His wife came in from the kitchen wiping her hands on a dish towel. She froze with alarm at his downcast eyes and shaking head.

"What is it, Mike? Have you lost your job?"

"No. Oh, a hell of a thing. I haven't got over it yet. A God damn hell of a thing. But how was I to know? How the devil was I to know?" He placed his revolver on the sideboard and tumbled down into a chair. His wife relaxed. He hadn't lost his job. Nothing else could be very tragic. Mike began gesturing with his hands. "I'm not a man who would do such a thing knowingly, God knows that. But what a hell of a thing to do!"

He was an enormous man with the greater part of his bulk concentrated below the belt. His shoulders sloped away from his neck giving his stature the general outlines of an egg. His hands were large, flabby and shapeless. His nose turned up and his features were pudgy. His wife loved him

because he was a policeman and brought home the news first hand.

"Don't sit there and takè on like a fool. What is it you've done, Mike?"

Mike shrugged sadly. "I was goin' through Lincoln Square stirrin' up the bums.<sup>1</sup> You know—I do it every night. There was a bunch on the benches near Third Street. I nudged 'em with my club and told 'em to move on." Sudden memory roused Mike from his dejection. "One of 'em a little stoop-shouldered rat in a dirty old coat a Chinaman wouldn't wear, started givin' me lip,<sup>2</sup> tellin' me about his rights and cussin' under his breath." Mike's voice grew strong with anger. "I told him a thing or two about his rights. Call me a hired flunkey,<sup>3</sup> will he, I showed him where he stood damn quick. I kicked his seat so he won't sit down for a week. They moved on after that, I'll tell you,"

"That's right, Mike. Don't take no nonsense from them. You're the law and they got to respect you."

"A fine city this would be with the police takin' their orders from bums!"

"You're right, Mike. But what happened?"

Mike sagged instantly into dejection at this reminder. "Well, I circled around the whole park. Three more of 'em was settin' under Lincoln's statue." He lifted his head and his voice rose again. "I didn't stop to argue with 'em this time, I'll tell you. 'See here, officer,' says one of 'em, and I gave him a poke. 'Who the hell do you think you're pushin'?' he asked. I kicked him right in the seat of his pants. 'I'll show you who I'm pushin',' I told him. They moved off after that all right. If it was me to say, I'd run 'em clear out of town, Mary. It's gettin' so there's more bums than decent citizens, and God knows where they come from—I don't."

Mike sagged once more into despair. "I was goin' back toward Third Street again, when I sees one sittin' on the bench up ahead under a tree where it was real dark. I figured it was one o' those bums tryin' to slip back again thinkin' I wouldn't see him. That's what I thought, Mary, so

I walked up quick and give him one with my club and kicked him."

"Well, what about it? What did he do?"

"That's the terrible thing, Mary. He didn't do anything. He fell over on his face into the road. It was a dead man."

"Oh!" Mary pursed her lips and closed her eyes.

"You understand, Mary, I didn't know. I had no way of knowing. There he was on the bench, and all. I wouldn't have kicked the body of a man who was in God's own presence—who had been called to judgment by our Lord. You know that, Mary. But I didn't know." He held his hands out to her as if for forgiveness.

"No, Michael, you didn't mean it. It was only that you didn't know."

"He was a Catholic too," said Mike bitterly. "At the morgue they found medals' around his neck. They say he starved to death."

Mary put one big freckled arm around his neck and took his great fist in her fat hand. Tears shone brightly in her tiny, pale blue eyes. "God's will is God's will," she said gently, "and it's not for us to understand his wisdom. But He knows and He forgive "



*Mike Quin*

## OSCAR WANTS TO KNOW

Mr. J. Fungus Finklebottom relaxed into his favorite overstuffed chair, adjusted his pince-nez, and opened the evening paper.

"Papa," said little Oscar Finklebottom, "What does opportunity mean?"

"Go play with your electric train," said J. Fungus. "Don't bother me."

"Answer the child," said Mrs. Finklebottom. "You treat him as if he was an affliction instead of your son and heir."

"Why do you have to dress him in that outfit?" asked J. Fungus. "It annoys me to look at him."

Oscar was dressed in a little Lord Fauntleroy suit. He was unfortunately cross-eyed and wore large horned-rimmed glasses.

"It distinguishes him from the other children in the neighborhood," said Mrs. Finklebottom. "You ought to be proud."

"Papa," said Oscar, "what is opportunity?"

"Opportunity is a chance to make some money. Now go bounce your ball," said J. Fungus.

"Papa, how do you make money?" asked Oscar.

"Answer him," said Mrs. Finklebottom. "The child wants to learn."

"You make money by going into business," said J. Fungus, still intent on his paper.

"Papa, can everybody go into business?"

"Certainly everybody can go into business.

"Suppose everybody went into business. Would they all be business men?"

"Yes, son, if they all went into business they would all be business men."

"Then who would do the work, Papa?"

"For the love of heaven, Amelia, tell this child to go play with his stuffed elephant. I'm trying to read Dewey's speech."

"Answer him," said Mrs. Finklebottom. "He wants to learn."

"Who would do the work, Papa?" repeated Oscar.

"Everybody couldn't go into business," said J. Fungus. "It would be impossible."

"But you said they could," insisted Oscar.

"I said nothing of the kind," said J. Fungus.

"Yes; you did," said Mrs. Finklebottom. "Answer the child."

"All right, then, they couldn't "

"Why couldn't they, Papa?"

"Because they don't have the money."

"If they had the money, could they?"

"Certainly."

"Then, if they all had the money and they all went into business, would they all be business men?"

"Yes, then they'd all be business men."

"And who would do the work, Papa?"

"Amelia, if you don't tell this child to ride his tricycle I'll drown him."

"Answer him, Fungus. He is thirsting for knowledge."

"Who would do the work, Papa?" asked Oscar.

"They couldn't all be business men," snapped J. Fungus.

"Not even if they had the money?" asked Oscar.

"Not even if they had the money," said J. Fungus. "Somebody's got to do the work. Besides, there's a limit to how many businesses could operate."

"How many people could be businessmen, Papa?"

"Well, one in a thousand, maybe. One in five hundred. Something like that. A small percentage. You see, son, you can't be a businessman if you don't have workers. So for every business man there has to be anywhere from ten to a hundred or a thousand workers."

"How many workers do you have, Papa?"

"Well, we're a big company, Oscar. We hire 10,000."

"Then most of the people don't have any opportunity, do they, Papa?"

"What are you talking about? In America every man has an equal opportunity."

"But Papa, if only a few men can ever be business men, what are the rest going to do?"

"They can be business men, too, if they show the initiative."

"But you said only a few of them could. Most of them have to be workers."

"That's right. Now run along, son. Go read Jack and the Beanstalk."

"Then most of the people are workers and will always be workers and couldn't be business men even if they wanted to, could they, Papa?"

"Certainly they could. No, come to think of it, they couldn't. Where do you get these ideas, son?"

"Then if most of the people are workers and will always be workers they won't ever be able to make any money, will they?"

"Well, if they got enough wages—if—Amelia, isn't it time this child went to bed?"

"If most of the people are workers and will always be workers the only way they can make any money is by getting higher wages. Isn't that true, Papa?" asked Oscar.

"Amelia," said J. Fungus, "I refuse to believe—that is I don't like to say—but this isn't a child. He's a nightmare. If he's my son, well—"

"Answer his questions," said Mrs. Finklebottom. "The child wants to learn. He hungers for knowledge."

*William DeMille*

## RUTHLESS

Outside, the woods lay basking in clear October sunlight; trees a riot of color, air full of Autumn's tang and the sharp, exciting smell of moist, leaf-covered earth.

Inside, a man smiled grimly as he turned from the bathroom cabinet, entered the expensively primitive livingroom of his mountain camp, and crossed to a closet set in the pine wall. It was his special closet, with a spring lock and in it he kept guns, ammunition, fishing-rods, tackle and liquor. Not even his wife was allowed to have a key, for Judson Webb loved his personal possessions and felt a sense of deep outrage if they were touched by any hand but his own. The closet door stood open; he had been packing his things away for the winter, and in a few minutes would be driving back to civilization.

As he looked at the shelf on which the liquor stood his smile was not attractive. All the bottles were unopened except one quart of Bourbon which was placed invitingly in front, a whiskey glass by its side. This bottle was less than half full. As he took it from the shelf his wife spoke from the adjoining bedroom:

"I'm all packed, Judson. Hasn't Alec come to run the water off and get the keys?"

Alec lived about a mile down the road and acted as caretaker for the city folks when they were away.

"He's down at the lake taking the boats out of water. Said he'd be back in half an hour."

Marcia came into the room carrying her suitcase. She paused in surprise as she saw the bottle in her husband's hand.

"Judson!" she exclaimed, "you're not taking a drink at ten o'clock in the morning?"

"You wrong me, my dear," he chuckled. "I'm not taking anything out of this bottle. I am merely putting a little kick into it."

His closed hand opened and he put upon the table two tiny white pellets as he started to uncork the whiskey. Her eyes narrowed as she watched him. She had learned to dread that tone of his voice; the tone he used when he was planning to "put something over" in a business deal.

"Whoever broke into my closet last Winter and stole my liquor will probably try it again once we are out of here;" he went on, "only this time he'll wish he hadn't."

She caught her breath at the cruel vindictiveness of his manner as one by one he dropped the tablets into the bottle and held it up to watch them dissolve.

"What are they?" she asked, "something to make him sick?"

"And how!" He seemed fascinated as he saw the genial Bourbon changing into a lethal dose: "At least no one has found an antidote: once it's down—it's curtains." He corked his bottled vengeance and set it back on the shelf alongside the little whiskey glass.

"Everything nice and handy," he remarked approvingly. "Now Mr. Thief, when you break in, drink hearty; I won't begrudge you this one."

The woman's face was pale. "Don't do it, Judson," she gasped. "It's horrible—it's murder."

"The law doesn't call it murder if I shoot a thief who is entering my house by force," he said harshly. "Also, the use of rat poison is quite legal. The only way any rat can

get into this closet,—is to break in. What happens, then is his affair, not mine."

"Don't do it, Judson," she begged. "The law doesn't punish burglary by death; what right have you—"

"When it comes to protecting my property I make my own laws." His deep voice suggested a big dog growling at threatened loss of a bone.

"But all they did was to steal a little liquor," she pleaded. "Probably some boys of on a lark. They didn't do any real damage."

"That's not the point," he said "If a man holds me up and robs me of five dollars it makes me just as sore as if he took a hundred. A thief's a thief."

She made one last effort. "We won't be here till next Spring. I can't bear to think of that deathtrap waiting there all the time. Suppose something happens to us—and no one knows—"

He chuckled once more at her earnestness. "We'll take a chance on that," he said. "I've made my pile by taking chances. If I should drop dead, you can do as you please. The stuff will be yours."

It was useless to argue, she knew. He had always been ruthless in business and whenever anything crossed him. Things had to be done his way. She turned toward the outer door with a sigh of defeat. "I'll walk down the road and say goodbye at the farmhouse," she said quietly "You can pick me up there." She had made up her mind to tell Alec's wife. Someone had to know.

"Okay, my dear," he smiled genially, "and don't worry about your poor, abused little burglar. No one is going to get hurt who hasn't got it coming to him."

As she went down the path he started to close the closet door; then paused as he remembered his hunting boots drying outside on the porch. They belonged in the closet, so leaving the door open he went to fetch them from the heavy, rustic table on which they stood, along with his bag and top coat.

Alec was coming up from the lake and waved to him from a distance. A chipmunk, hearing Judson's heavy tread, abandoned the acorn he was about to add to his store within the cabin wall and disappeared, like an electric bulb burning out. Judson, reaching for his boots, stepped fairly upon the acorn, his foot slid from under him and his head struck the massive table as he fell.

Several minutes later he began to regain his senses. Alec's strong arm was supporting him as he lay on the porch and a kindly voice was saying: "Twarn't much of a fall, Mr. Webb. You ain't cut none; just knocked out for a minute. Here, take this; it'll pull you together."

A small whiskey glass was pressed to his lips. Dazed and half-conscious, he drank.

*Rube Goldberg*

## ART FOR HEART'S SAKE

"Here, take your pineapple juice," gently persuaded Koppel, the male nurse.

"Nopel" grunted Collis P. Ellsworth.

"But it's good for you, sir."

"Nopel"

"It's doctor's orders."

"Nopel"

Koppel heard the front door bell and was glad to leave the room. He found Doctor Caswell in the hall downstairs. "I can't do a thing with him," he told the doctor. "He won't take his pineapple juice. He doesn't want me to read to him. He hates the radio. He doesn't like anything!"

Doctor Caswell received the information with his usual professional calm. He had done some constructive thinking since his last visit. This was no ordinary case. The old gentleman was in pretty good shape for a man of seventy six. But he had to be kept from buying things. He had suffered his last heart attack after his disastrous purchase of that jerkwater<sup>1</sup> railroad out in Iowa. The one before that came from the excitement engendered by the disintegration of The Happy Package chain of grocery stores which he had acquired at a fabulous price. All of his purchases of recent years had to be liquidated at a great sacrifice both to his health and his pocketbook.



Collis P. Ellsworth sat in a huge over-upholstered chair by the window. He looked around as Doctor Caswell inquired, "Well, how's the young man today?"

"Umph!" grunted the figure in the chair in a tone like a rasping cough with all the implications of a sneer.

"I hear you haven't been obeying orders," the doctor chided.

"Who's giving me orders at my time of life?"

The doctor drew up a chair and sat down close to the old man. "I've got a proposition for you," he said quietly.

Old Ellsworth looked suspiciously over his spectacles. "What is it, more medicine, more automobile rides, more balderdash to keep me away from the office?"

"How'd you like to take up art?" The doctor had his stethoscope ready in case the abruptness of the suggestion proved too much for the patient's heart.

But the old gentleman's answer was a vigorous "Rot!"

"I don't mean seriously," said the doctor, relieved that disaster had been averted. "Just fool around with chalk and crayons. It'll be fun."

"Bosh!"

"All right." The doctor stood up. "I just suggested it, that's all."

Collis P. sucked his gums and his wrinkled chin bobbed up and down. "Where'd you get this crazy idea, anyway?"

"Well, it's only a suggestion—"

"But, Caswell, how do I start playing with the chalk—that is, if I'm foolish enough to start?"

"I've thought of that, too. I can get a student from one of the art schools to come here once a week and show you. If you don't like it after a little while you can throw him out."

Doctor Caswell went to his friend, Judson Livingston, head of the Atlantic Art Institute, and explained the situation. Livingston had just the young man—Frank Swain, eigh-

teen years old and a promising student. He needed the money. Ran an elevator<sup>2</sup> at night to pay tuition. How much would he get? Five dollars a visit. Fine.

Next afternoon young Swain was shown into the big living room. Collis P. Ellsworth looked at him appraisingly.

"Sir, I'm not an artist yet," answered the young man.

"Umph!"

Swain arranged some paper and crayons on the table. "Let's try and draw that vase over there on the mantelpiece," he suggested.

"Try it, Mister Ellsworth, please."

"Umph!" The old man took a piece of crayon in a shaky hand and made a scrawl. He made another scrawl and connected the two with a couple of crude lines. "There it is, young man," he snapped with a grunt of satisfaction. "Such foolishness. Poppycock!" Frank Swain was patient. He needed the five dollars. "If you want to draw you will have to look at what you're drawing, sir."

Old Ellsworth squinted and looked. "By gum,<sup>4</sup> it's kinda pretty. I never noticed it before."

Koppel came in with the pronouncement that his patient had done enough for the first lesson.

"Oh, it's pineapple juice again," Ellsworth mumbled. Swain left.

When the art student came the following week there was a drawing on the table that had a slight resemblance to the vase. The wrinkles deepened at the corners of the old gentleman's eyes as he asked elfishly,<sup>3</sup> "Well, what do you think of it?"

"Not bad, sir," answered Swain. "But it's a bit lopsided."

"By gum," Old Ellsworth chuckled, "I see. The halves don't match." He added a few lines with a palsied hand and colored the open spaces blue like a child playing with a picture book. Then he looked towards the door. "Listen, young man," he whispered, "I want to ask you something before old pineapple juice comes back."

"Yes, sir," responded Swain respectively.

"I was thinking could you spare the time to come twice a week or perhaps three times?"

"Sure, Mister Ellsworth."

"Good. Let's make it Monday, Wednesday and Friday. Four o'clock."

Koppel entered and was flabbergasted when his patient took his pineapple juice without a whimper.

As the weeks went by Swain's visits grew more frequent. He brought the old man a box of water colors and some tubes of oils.

When Doctor Caswell called Ellsworth would talk about the graceful lines of the andirons.<sup>5</sup> He would dwell on the rich variety of color in a bowl of fruit. He proudly displayed the variegated smears of paint on his heavy silk dressing gown. He would not allow his valet to send it to the cleaner's. He wanted to show the doctor how hard he'd been working.

The treatment was working perfectly. No more trips downtown to become involved in purchases of enterprises of doubtful solvency. No more crazy commercial gyrations<sup>6</sup> to tax<sup>7</sup> the strength of a lumbering old heart. Art was a complete cure for acute financial deterioration.

The doctor thought it safe to allow Ellsworth to visit the Metropolitan, the Museum of Modern Art and other exhibits with Swain. An entirely new world opened up its charming mysteries. The old man displayed an insatiable curiosity about the galleries and the painters who exhibited in them. How were the galleries run? Who selected the canvases for the exhibitions? An idea was forming in his brain.

When the late Spring sun began to cloak the fields and gardens with color Ellsworth executed a god-awful smudge which he called, "Trees Dressed in White." Then he made a startling announcement. He was going to exhibit it in the Summer show at the Lathrop Gallery!

For the Summer show at Lathrop Gallery was the biggest

art exhibit of the year in quality, if not in size. The lifetime dream of every mature artist in the United States was a Lathrop prize. Upon this distinguished group Ellsworth was going to foist his "Trees Dressed in White," which resembled a gob of salad dressing thrown violently up against the side of a house!

"If the papers get hold of this, Mister Ellsworth will become a laughing-stock. We've got to sop<sup>8</sup> him," groaned Koppel.

"No," admonished the doctor. "We can't interfere with him now and take a chance of spoiling all the good work that we've accomplished."

To the utter astonishment of all three—and especially Swain—"Trees Dressed in White" was accepted for the Lathrop show. Not only was Mister Ellsworth crazy, thought Koppel, but the Lathrop Gallery was crazy, too.

Fortunately, the painting was hung in an inconspicuous place where it could not excite any noticeable comment. Young Swain sneaked into the gallery one afternoon and blushed to the top of his ears when he saw "Trees Dressed in White," a loud, raucous splash on the wall. As two giggling students stopped before the strange anomaly Swain fled in terror. He could not bear to hear what they had to say.

During the course of the exhibition the old man kept on taking his lessons, seldom mentioning his entry in the exhibit. He was unusually cheerful. Every time Swain entered the room he found Ellsworth chuckling. Maybe Koppel was right. The old man was crazy. But it seemed equally strange that the Lathrop committee should encourage his insanity by accepting his picture.

Two days before the close of the exhibition a special messenger brought a long official-looking envelope to Mister Ellsworth while Swain, Koppel and the doctor were in the room. "Read it to me," requested the old man. "My eyes are tired from painting."

It gives the Lathrop Gallery pleasure to announce that the First Landscape Prize of \$1,000 has been awarded to Collis P. Ellsworth for his painting, "Trees Dressed in White."

Swain and Koppel uttered a series of inarticulate gurgles. Doctor Caswell, exercising his professional selfcontrol with a supreme effort, said "Congratulations, Mister Ellsworth. Fine, fine . . . See, see . . . Of course, I didn't expect such great news. But, but--well, now, you'll have to admit that art is much more satisfying than business."

"Art's nothing," snapped the old man. "I bought the Lathrop Gallery last month."

## II



*Stefan Heym*

## KNOW YOUR PLACE

*(Excerpt from the Novel "The Crusaders")*

The *Autobahn* leading through the heart of the industrial Ruhr area branched off, and the secondary road, like a descending arrow, pointed to the city of Kremmen. Kremmen! the Pittsburgh of the Ruhr, the former domain of the Rintelens and now the domain of Farrish and Willoughby.

Farrish didn't live in the luxurious villa which his rank might very well have afforded him. He stayed with his headquarters troops in the barracks that once had belonged to the Kremmen Dragoons.

The Kremmen Dragoons had been a *Traditions-Regiment*. They and their tradition had been smashed in the Caucasus, but the memory of their flags, their drum and life corps, their showy parades, lingered on.

"I want order! I want things to get started!" The words, repeated again and again in the General's strident command voice, rang in Willoughby's ears. And faster, Willoughby added to himself, and on a bigger scale than anywhere else. He knew why—hadn't he helped to put the bug in the General's ear? A war reputation was well and good, but back in the States they forgot easily. Farrish had his new future to think of—politics: Senator, Governor, and more.

And Willoughby had his own future to think of.



Every day brought him face to face with this future. His job forced him into close touch with civilian life—even if it was the civilian life of a foreign, conquered country. In the suppliant businessmen, lawyers, officials, whose political and economic security depended so blatantly on his good graces, Willoughby saw a depressing preview of what he, himself, might be in a year's time, when he came back to the States. He read the newspapers from the States, the letters from Coster, the senior partner of Coster, Bruille, Reagan and Willoughby, and realized with panic that he should be back in America, in the race for the big reconversion money, for the positions and jobs and clients that determined a man's postwar career. When his turn came to go back home, he would have to start in the race with a heart-breaking handicap—unless he managed here, from Kremmen, or through Farrish, to create for himself an advantage that would guarantee him a solid jumping-off point on his return. Longingly, he thought of the Delacroix deal. If he had succeeded in tying up Prince Bereskin with the Amalgamated Steel interests...! But that had been spoiled by Yates.

Willoughby brought to his job all his resources for petty politics, all his ability to compromise, all his charm. But it didn't seem to be enough. Supreme Headquarters deluged him with contradictory directives. They demanded de-Nazi-fication and told him to fire the Nazi party members in his civilian German administration. They demanded a smooth-functioning Government which depended on the very men he was supposed to throw out. They demanded he get the Rintelen Works going—*Steel! they needed, Germany needs steel!*—but didn't tell him who was to own and to run the Works.

And then he chose his fourth and final Mayor.

Take a work horse from the plow and harness it in front of a gig. It will feel puzzled, out of place, it won't enjoy the change, and it won't go any faster.

That's how Troy felt after the novelty of his assignment, as Public Safety Officer under Willoughby had worn off.

Sometimes he asked himself why Willoughby had picked him, of all people. The answer was easy; he only needed to look at Loomis, whom Willoughby had requested from De-Witt and placed in charge of Economics—*Wirtschaft*, the Germans called it. In the town of the giant steel mills, Loomis knew as much of *Wirtschaft* as Troy knew of the police which he headed.

If Troy had let it go at that, and pulled along his little gig quietly, and, like Loomis, said Yes to Willoughby at the frequent conferences, he could have lived comfortably and happily. But it wasn't Troy's kind of happiness. Troy was conscientious.

He came to Willoughby. "We've got to give them work! We've got to put them up somewhere, organize community houses, organize food." To him it seemed so simple, logical. Why wasn't it done?

Willoughby grew cool. He pulled forward the fat under his jowls, and his small, worried eyes closed. "You stick to your job, Troy," he said.

Troy knew what was going through Willoughby's mind: Troublemaker! Lost his own command, now he wants to screw up mine.

Troy was trudging to another of Willoughby's conferences. It was senseless, tiresome.

Sarcastically, Willoughby said, "We can't have local Government by SHAEF<sup>2</sup> directive, we've got to have a Mayor. We've had three in as many weeks—a professor, a doctor, and a former newspaperman. Seems we had tough luck." Willoughby continued darkly. "Each time we install one in office, some bright character from Counter-Intelligence comes around and tells us the guy's been a Nazi. Well, this Mayor is going to stick! Even if he's Hitler in disguise—I can handle him! Fellow I've chosen is Herr Lämmlein, a *Generaldirektor* or Vice President of the Rintelen Works. A businessman—and I know he was never a member of the Nazi party. The prominent position that my man holds with Rintelen will give the people confidence in

their Government. And he speaks English. Personally, I like businessmen. They're sober and enterprising and know how to organize. Of course, we'll see how he works out before we make it a definite appointment."

Troy had no opinions on businessmen. He believed that Willoughby had chosen carefully before making the announcement.

\* \* \*

The Widow Rintelen was a big woman. Everything about her was big—her protuberant eyes, her cheeks, her chin, her flesh that was bloated and swollen. Only her hands and feet were small and ludicrous, and her voice which was also soft and mostly frightened, the result of the years during which Maximilian von Rintelen had held undisputed sway over her life and the lives of most of the people of Kremmen.

In a sense, Maximilian von Rintelen—the ennobling prefix *von* had been given him by the late Kaiser—still ruled his home, through his spirit, which the Widow could feel, sometimes almost physically, or through his portrait that filled the wall panel at the top of the broad, carpeted stairway of the main hall of the manor house. The portrait, done in the manner of Rembrandt, showed him against a dark background, his magnificent white beard sweeping over his wide chest, his close-set, greedy eyes peering into every corner of the house, his sensual lips half-hidden by his mustache. An aura of light from the top corner of the canvas shot across his bald pate and concentrated on his hands. They were long, gnarled, grasping, punishing hands.

Where was the man to take his place? There was none. The time for great men had passed.

Dehn, the son-in-law, who had married Pamela, was away in the war. So Lämmlein had taken over: Lämmlein, the shrewd gray Vice President of the Works, gray eyes, gray skin, gray hair, gray suits. He was good in his way; cultured, a compromiser. But he was not a great man, and

"the Widow sensed that the empire Maximilian von Rintelen had left her would crumble under her hands.

• With a sigh, the Widow let herself glide into the chair behind the big, modern, glass-topped desk. Pamela came down the stairs, the rug swallowing her steps. The Widow felt her daughter's presence and jumped up with surprising quickness, as if she had been caught at some felony.

"Sit there!" said Pamela, her low voice contemptuous. "There's nothing to his chair. It's just a chair."

"I'm nervous. You came upon me so suddenly."

"The chair! The desk! I wish it had all gone to pieces. This whole house! It depresses me. I want it redecorated. I suppose now that the stupid fighting is over we can get it done." Pamela perched on the desk. Her hands left spots on the glass top and the Widow wiped them off.

"Your father was a great man, a wonderful man, an empire builder!"

"I never liked him. What's left of him? What's left of the empire?"

The Widow tore open the middle drawer of the desk, pushing it hard against the blubber of her stomach. "How petty you are! How little you know!" She pulled out a map and threw it on the top of the desk. "See for yourself! Parts of the Kremmen plant are destroyed—but only parts. The foundry could be back in operation within a few weeks! Lämmlein says so himself. And what about the other plants? Mülheim? Gelsenkirchen? Hardly touched! And the mines? You cannot destroy mines."

"So the Americans will take them. Let them! You'll never get away from Maxie's hands. Why don't you bury him and what he left?"

The butler came in. He was a square-faced Hollander and he looked as though he might burst out of his predecessor's cutaway.

"Gentleman to see Frau Pamela."

Pamela smiled at him and said, "I guess I'll have to dress...."

Pettinger entered softly. He wore an ill-fitting, unpressed business suit, and the cuffs of his shirt were frayed and dirt-rimmed. The bones in his sharp face seemed more pronounced, the skin over them tighter; or, perhaps, the shadows were deepened because he needed a shave. Yet, he managed to maintain an appearance.

He looked around. He liked the place, it had quality. It was run down—but what wasn't, these days?

"Frau von Rintelen?"

She wanted to ask who he was, but he didn't give her the chance.

"I won't tell you my name, madame. The less you know, the better for you. Where is your daughter, Pamela?"

"What do you want?" She was frightened.

"I'm a friend of Major Dehn, your son-in-law."

From the stairs, Pamela asked, "What about him?" She came down slowly, imperceptibly pausing on each step. Pettinger lowered his lids, as if she were too much for him to see.

Pamela noticed the reaction. "Where is Major Dehn?"

Pettinger placed his hat and overcoat on a chair. "I don't know," he said. "When I saw him last, at the Rolands-Eck on the shore of the Rhine, he said to me: My friend, if ever you need anything, you must go to the Rintelen house, to Pamela. . . ."

Pamela screwed up her mouth. "And why didn't you stay with my husband?"

Pettinger turned to face both women. "Major Dehn was perhaps my best friend. A little high-strung, but a fine man to work with, and a pleasure to command. I assure you it was a very difficult decision. But some must live on, and others must sacrifice themselves."

"And who decides," asked Pamela, with a vicious lilt, "who is to live and who is to be sacrificed?"

"I do!" said Pettinger.

That flushed the Widow's incipient revolt against the intruder. Whoever he was, he had spoken with the Master's

voice which, like Maximilian von Rintelen's tolerated no opposition.

He continued, "It is essential that I stay here."

The Widow shook off her trance. "With what right—"

"Madame!" Pettinger interrupted her gently. "I am a German officer. I have important work to do. Your estate, this house, are ideal for me."

"I'm sorry!" the Widow said as authoritatively as her birdlike voice permitted.

Pamela's eyes showed more than a casual interest. "How long are you planning to stay, Herr...?"

"Call me Erich."

"...Herr Erich?"

"I don't know. I realize what it means to you, so I'll stay no longer—than—" His eyes opened wide and fastened on Pamela's supple throat. "Than absolutely necessary."

The Widow pleaded, "A man like you will be tracked down. And then? Pamela and myself would be arrested; the house would be taken from us, the house and the steel mills and the mines, the heritage my husband left us..."

"If you refuse," he said slowly, "you might as well hand me over to the Americans, madame."

"But the house...!" clamored the Widow, cornered.

He smiled. "There isn't a house in all Germany as safe as yours."

The Widow turned her bulk to Pettinger and looked him over, doubtfully.

"A poor man's house," he explained with good humor, "or an ordinary respectable house—they're no good. They will be searched or looted or taken; their owners will be dispossessed at the whim of any American. Not so with yours. The Americans respect the big things. The name of Rintelen is a big name. It is known in America. The big people over there knew him. The financial pages of their newspapers gave columns to him and his empire—such a man, his widow, his house, will not be touched."

It was something she hadn't thought of. It did her good. She said, "Maximilian von Rintelen would have liked you as a guest, I'm sure. But he was a man who could face anyone. I hope this house is safe. It won't be, if they should find you here."

"Madame," he said, "they can't find me here, unless they happen to look here. But if I should be caught elsewhere—anywhere - you will surely lose the empire that Maximilian von Rintelen built, including your house. It will be taken from you, sooner or later, *unless our military defeat is turned into a political victory*. There are men to do that. They're now in a desperate spot, these men. If you want to drive me away. . .!" He shrugged.

Hans Heinrich Lämmlein, Mayor-to-be of Kremmen, drove up to the Rintelen estate in excellent spirits. He liked his sleek, dark limousine which Loomis permitted him to run with American-controlled gasoline. He liked the feeling of purpose and security which had returned to him much sooner than he had dared to hope. And Willoughby was his kind of man, despite their difference in appearance and character, despite the gulf between the conqueror and the conquered. What they had in common transcended boundaries, language, tradition, uniforms, and sentries with fixed bayonet.

He greeted the Widow with the respect due the controlling interest in the Rintelen Works, but with that touch of familiarity permissible to the faithful administrator who knew the secrets of the books and the problems of the time. Pulling up his pearl-gray impeccable tie so that it fit snugly to his stiff, high collar, he announced, "The Americans are easier to get along with than I expected. It makes a difference whether a person is bred in our Western civilization, or not. I've had a spirited exchange of ideas with Lieutenant Colonel Willoughby, the Chief Military Government Officer; and the result is most favorable, most favorable. Madame, I want you to be the first, as it should be, to hear the good news."

"Achl!" said the Widow. "What good news can there be these days? We've lost the war. One feels it in everything."

"I'll get you the best servants, Frau von Rintelen. I am going to be the American-appointed, American-backed Mayor of Kremmen!"

The Widow sat bolt upright.

Lämmlein allowed himself a smile. "Think what this means, Madame!"

The Widow could imagine very well what it meant. She saw the bombed-out parts of her husband's creation rise from the ashes, rebuilt by the labor that Lämmlein now could command. She saw the furnaces going, fired by coke that Lämmlein now could requisition...

Lämmlein, his gray face expressionless, observed the Widow's swaying emotions. "Naturally, we can't expect something for nothing," he said.

He waited to let the importance of this bit sink in. Her face fell, her mouth snapped tight, her eyes became hostile and said plainly that she wasn't going to give up anything for the aggrandizement and gain of Lämmlein.

"Don't forget," he warned, "without the Americans' support, you own nothing but a questionable title to some half-destroyed properties. The Colonel has consented to come here this afternoon for a private little conference just the three of us and Frau Pamela."

He studied the Widow. She looked more than ever like a tub, and her black dress, closed tightly around her triple chin, made her grotesque.

"You may want to change your gown, madame," he suggested. "I've taken the liberty of bringing your jewelry from the safe in the air-raid shelter. We want to make an impression."

The safe, a secret known only to the Widow, the dead Maximilian, and Lämmlein, stood deep in the reinforced shelter underneath the destroyed office building of the Rintelen Works, in which her husband had found his death. If



only he had gone there in time! The shelter had stood up under the tumbling of everything on top of it.

She sighed. She took the shiny metal box from Lämmlein, and, holding it carefully in her small, fat hands, waddled to her husband's desk and put it down gently. She opened the box. The jewels Maximilian had given her glittered against their pale blue velvet cushion. A fortune!

"I think you should wear them," said Lämmlein.

Then he noticed Pamela and the man coming down the stairway. Lämmlein placed himself in front of the jewels.

The Widow snapped close the lid of the box.

"Herr Erich," said Pamela, "meet Herr Lämmlein."

The two men sniffed at one another. The stranger's face was familiar to Lämmlein, though he couldn't place it.

"Lämmlein," Pettinger repeated thoughtfully, "Lämmlein... You never joined the party, did you?"

"No, I didn't." Lämmlein's gray face became a tinge grayer. "Herr von Rintelen didn't wish—"

"I remember!" said Pettinger. "There was quite a correspondence on the matter, until the old man up there"—he pointed vaguely at the portrait—"took a hand."

He saw the glint of recognition come into Lämmlein's eyes.

"This is insane!" Lämmlein broke out. "What are you doing here?"

"Frau Pamela and I have agreed that, for the time being, I shall take the place of Major Dehn, who's unaccounted for. I'm wearing his suit, you see! Same size, same everything." He patted Pamela's hand.

Lämmlein flushed with worry and outrage. "There are people in this city who remember Major Dehn!" he spluttered.

"I won't leave the grounds," Pettinger assured him. "You can see I'm not quite myself; I need rest. I will count on you to be one of my—let us say: go-betweens?"

"I will do nothing of the sort!"

Pettinger was part of the Germany that had been a source of pride and profits to Lämmlein. Lämmlein would keep

his mouth shut. But that Germany was gone; and he was not going to get himself involved in any underground affairs.

Lämmlein found his bearings. "You will leave immediately! I'm going to be the Mayor of Kremmen! Germany's future lies in co-operating with the Americans!"

"Who tells you that I want to do anything but co-operate with the Americans?" Pettinger said angrily. "I want to talk to you—alone!"

"Not now—we haven't time. . . ." Lämmlein blinked nervously. "*Herr Oberstleutnant* Willoughby—the Military Governor—he's coming here. Due any moment—"

"That's wonderful!" said Pettinger. "That's why I must talk to you, now!" Holding Lämmlein's arm tightly, he prodded the Mayor-to-be into the library.

Once inside the room, and the door closed, Pettinger relaxed his grip. "Sit down!" he ordered.

But Lämmlein didn't sit down. "The war's been lost, *Herr Obersturmbannführer!*" he pleaded. "All you can do here is spoil what I am trying to build!"

Pettinger pushed him into a chair. "If you want to be the Americans' Mayor—go ahead! Fits in perfectly with what I have in mind. . . ."

In short words, he outlined his strategy for a German come-back. He watched Lämmlein's face and noted the changes that came over it, as anxiety gave way to consideration, and finally unqualified acceptance of the idea.

"Play along with them!" Pettinger concluded. "Preserve for us what can be maintained. Because, beaten and defeated, we still hold the balance of power. But we must know where we're going! We must have a perspective! We must have a leadership, an organization that works through all channels—through business, schools, the Church, through demobilized officers and returned prisoners of war. Slowly, patiently—until *Der Tag* when we'll spring forward, full-grown, and dictate our terms!"

When Willoughby arrived at the manor house, the stage was set for him. In the center of the main hall, on a high-backed thronelike chair, sat the Widow, resplendent in her jewels. Her long gown covered her bulk to the ankles so that only her small feet in their elegant pumps were visible. To her right, half-buried between blankets and pillows, reclined Pettinger in the largest, most comfortable chair in the hall.

"If I'm to be Major Dehn," Pettinger had said as they worked out the details for Willoughby's visit, "I'm going to be right with you. I'm not going to *cache*<sup>3</sup> myself away and run the risk of being suddenly found or reported by the servants. The best way of being unobtrusive is to be right where everybody can see me."

Willoughby was sitting *vis-a-vis* the Widow. He saw a certain pathos in the devoted little family. The Old World splendor gave him a feeling of inferiority mixed with condescension. Once he got through here, maybe he'd be able to buy the whole manor house, ship it across, and set it up in the suburbs.

Willoughby took his time to warm up; with palpable disinterest he inquired after the huge woman's health, and where had Major Dehn served? And where had he been stricken with illness?

Pettinger named a Russian village in the vicinity of Stalingrad that he knew so well.

Willoughby frowned. "Very unwise of you to lose yourself in the unlimited space of Russia. Biting off more than you could chew, underestimating the enemy. But these were always German traits"

Pettinger agreed. But he added, "You see it too mechanically, Colonel. One night, we beat back a Russian attack. It was thirty or forty below zero. They remained mowed down in front of our positions. We figured what wasn't killed would freeze to death in half an hour. Four hours later, just before dawn, these same men rose from the frozen

ground and attacked. And beat us. I don't know what makes them fight that way. But I know we were your protection against the East!"

Lämmlein, who didn't like the political slant of the conversation, whispered something to the Widow. The Widow slowly reached for a bell and rang. A maid entered, carrying tea things.

"How long since you're out of the German Army, Major Dehn?" asked Willoughby.

"A year and a half," said Pettinger. "I wish we had quit then. . . ."

"Not really!" said Willoughby. "The Rintelens must have made a neat pile—the bigger the longer the war lasted."

Lämmlein came to the rescue. "Taxes!" he said. "Nazi regimentation!" And look at the destruction. What do we have now?"

The tea was poured into Meissen cups.

Willoughby was still interested in Pettinger. "Before the war, what was your position in the Rintelen Works?"

Again, Lämmlein wanted to jump into the breach. But Pettinger anticipated him.

"Oh, well—formally, I believe I was on the board of directors. I was interested in the fine arts, paintings, sculpture. I traveled—Italy, England, France. You see, Colonel"—his voice became soft—"Pamela's and mine was a marriage of love." He took her hand and fondled it. "Herr von Rintelen, God bless him, always tried to make a businessman of me." He shook his head, smiled, "I used to feel: What good is all that money if you use it just to make more?"

The tea made Willoughby speak out bluntly.

"I'm going to make your man, Lämmlein, Mayor of this town. That ought to show you that we don't take advantage of our position."

"More tea?" said the Widow.

"No, thanks."

"A cookie?"

Willoughby tried one. It tasted like straw.

"What's in that?"

The Widow said, "We have little to eat." And as she felt Willoughby's eyes appraise her heft, she blushed, "I'm a sick woman!"

"Sorry," said Willoughby.

"Ach," said the Widow, "you have pinned us to the ground. How will we ever raise ourselves?"

Willoughby stretched himself. "Mr. Lämmlein, have you explained to the family the difficulty of the Rintelens' position?"

"I think Frau von Rintelen knows — in general terms. . ."

"Well, let me make it specific," said Willoughby, stroking forward the flesh under his jowls. "It was a total war. There are people on our side who consider the role that the Rintelens played in the same light as—well—as the activities of Himmler, or Streicher. . ."

The bracelets on the Widow's colossal arms began to tinkle. "But this is impossible!" she twittered. "We never mixed in politics. What was my husband to do? Refuse the Government's orders? Have his properties confiscated by Goering? Have himself locked up in a concentration camp?"

Pettinger said, "Papa was always so correct!"

"I understand," said Willoughby. "Herr von Rintelen tried to hold on to what he owned—that's why you're now in danger of losing it. How many of our men, would you guess, were killed by Rintelen products?"

"You don't condemn a German soldier for having shot at you!" Lämmlein said. "He was ordered to do it!"

"But we keep him behind barbed wire," Willoughby countered dryly.

Pettinger was quite calm; he saw no threat whatever to his asylum. If there were Americans with that kind of grudge against German industry, they weren't in power—otherwise, the Rintelen Works would have been taken over by them the day their troops took Kremmen.

"If you have come to take me away," the Widow said heroically, "I am ready."

Willoughby listened to her warbling. He had the feeling that it wasn't she talking at all, that a music box was hidden somewhere in that stomach.

"I said I understood your position. I said I'm not prejudiced. I'm going to make Lämmlein the Mayor of Kremmen, provided we can come to an understanding. If we can't, you may lose everything, even this house."

Lämmlein said, "We have been beaten. We will do anything—within reason."

"That's the spirit!" said Willoughby. "Madame?"

"Anything within reason."

Willoughby was satisfied. "The Rintelen Works are owned entirely by the family?"

"Yes," said the Widow, proudly.

"That's bad," said Willoughby.

Both Pettinger and Lämmlein were tense. The men knew that Willoughby was finally coming to the point. Pamela hated him. Her hand gripped Pettinger's, and he answered her pressure.

"Don't you see," said Willoughby, "any German plant, today, is a highly uncertain property. We may consider it as war potential and destroy it—we may use it for reparations.... What you need is somebody outside Germany who has some interest!"

"Delacroix!" cried Lämmlein.

Willoughby controlled a slight jump. He had been trying to think of an angle for bringing in Amalgamated<sup>5</sup> decently; but this was much better. He was cool when he asked, "What about Delacroix?"

Lämmlein's eagerness had changed back to dejection. "Old history, unfortunately, as business deals go. As soon as our armies took Paris, Herr von Rintelen went there and saw Prince Bereskin—you know who he is?"

"I've heard of him," smiled Willoughby.

Pettinger fidgeted under his blankets.

"And the Prince accepted what Herr von Rintelen offered him," said Lämmlein.

"Blackmail," said Willoughby.

Lämmlein turned and regarded the dead man's portrait, "Persuasion—shall we call it persuasion?"

"Blackmail!" insisted Willoughby.

"Herr von Rintelen bought back the 20 per cent of his stock which were owned by Delacroix."

"The sale is legally not valid. Won't stand up before any court. I'm saying that as an American and as a lawyer."

"We have the papers!" said Lämmlein.

"Papers!" scorned Willoughby. "Signed with a bayonet at your ribs!"

"Herr von Rintelen used no such crude methods."

"Mr. Lämmlein! It is for everybody's benefit to say that he did."

Pettinger's chest was giving trouble again. "Why not?" he said between coughs. "Let's say he did."

Willoughby sighed. "You Germans lack insight. I always thought so. You have to be pushed to see matters realistically."

Lämmlein nodded. The Widow was getting away cheaply, at that. If the 20 per cent of Rintelen shares were returned to Delacroix, the Widow would keep the remaining 80 at the price of 20. Quite a bargain, considering that the 20 per cent really had cost old Maximilian nothing since he had paid the Prince in Nazi-manipulated francs, just fancy paper.

"Tea?" said the Widow.

"Thanks," said Willoughby. He was having a vision. He saw himself presenting Delacroix's defunct interest in the Rintelen Works to Prince Bereskin. In return, Bereskin was tying up with Amalgamated Steel. Amalgamated, Delacroix, Rintelen—one combine, with a world to be rebuilt, rebuilt in steel! And it was he, Willoughby, who handed the whole kit and caboodle<sup>6</sup> to CBR & W. After that, perhaps, it would be W & CBR,<sup>7</sup> and the least he would get, on the side, was a seat on the Board of Directors of Amalgamated; neither Old

Man Coster nor the steel people were pikers, you had to say that for them.

He rose. "It was a pleasant afternoon, *Herr Bürgermeister*."

"Thank you, sir," beamed Lämmlein and grasped Wiloughby's hand.

\* \* \*

Kellermann's first instinct was to run.

Herr Bendel, Director of the Welfare Office in Kremmen's city hall, had not exaggerated when he called the place the "Lower Depths." It had once served as barracks for foreign workers shanghaied<sup>8</sup> to slave in the Rintelen Works. The foreigners had been evacuated by the Americans and were housed in something slightly better, the new DP Camps.<sup>9</sup> The barbed-wire fence around the Lower Depths was still there; and the building itself, its top floor laid bare by incendiary bombs, was even more crowded now that it had become the Home for the Political Victims of National Socialism than it had been when the slave workers were quartered in it.

He thought how right the Professor had been. "*Status quo ante!*"<sup>10</sup> Seckendorff had guffawed. "Under the Nazis, we were the lowest thing in the country. That somebody has stepped on top of the Nazis doesn't mean we have come up!" And the professor had suggested the Welfare Office.

A newcomer, a girl, pretty even in her rags, came into the room. "Is there an empty bunk?"

"How long were you in?" Kellermann asked the girl. He didn't have to elaborate the *in*; The *in* meant only one thing.

"Two and a half years," she said. "First jail, then Buchenwald."

He gave her a sympathetic glance.

"What did they get you for?" he asked.

"What for...!" she said. "They didn't like my face, I suppose."

"I'm sorry."



"I hate to be questioned. I've been questioned too much in my life, and it never was fun."

She was wiggling her toes. Her feet were well built, and she had good legs and pretty knees and supple thighs—her way of sitting gave him ample opportunity to take it all in.

"My name's Marianne."

"I'm Rudolf Kellermann. I was in Paula Camp. I made a friend there—an old man. We escaped from there together. And he's not very practical—an old professor. He was famous, though, in his time. Professor Seckendorff of the University of Munich."

"I know who he is," she said quickly.

Kellermann felt her tenseness. "How do you know?"

She reached into her bosom and took out a soiled clipping. "From the new paper the Americans are publishing...."

Kellermann read it eagerly, and with mixed emotions. It was a letter to the editor, signed by one Dr. Friedrich Gross of the Kremmen Emergency Hospital, who wrote that he once had studied Latin under Seckendorff. *It might interest the editor and the public in general.* . . , it stated, and gave in detail and mannered style the history of the Professor and his two children up to the time he collapsed in Herr Bendel's office and was carted off to the Hospital, where he was being treated by the undersigned. The letter closed with the statement that men like Professor Seckendorff represented the best in Germany, the true Germany of the poets and philosophers.

Stirred as always when he was reminded of the Professor's story, Kellermann returned the clipping.

"Why did you save that clipping?"

She was so immersed in her thoughts, and in the plan which was swirling through her mind, that Kellermann had to repeat his question.

"Well—why? You can trust me!"

"Very simple," she said finally. "My name's Seckendorff, too."

She looked at his face. It mirrored surprise, pleasure—then doubt. In all the time he had been with the Professor, as often as the old man had spoken of his children, the existence of a Marianne Seckendorff had never been mentioned.

She pulled out another slip, Bendel's chit assigning her a place in the Lower Depths. There was her name, black on white, countersigned by the Welfare Director: *Marianne Seckendorff*.

"Any relation of the Professor's?"

Her answer came immediately, glibly. "I'm his niece.... Poor Hans and Clara. That's when I was arrested, in Munich, in front of the University. They tried to make me talk. They tried to make me admit that I'd helped to hand out the leaflets. But I kept quiet. It was terrible. They beat me.... I didn't confess anything!" she said proudly and faced him, her eyes crossing slightly.

And she hadn't confessed. The Secret State Police, questioning the little pickpocket, had touched only cursorily on the name similarity between her and the two student leaders. The arrest of all three, during the same week, in the same neighborhood of the same city, was charged to coincidence. The Gestapo had been satisfied with the fact that Marianne was the daughter of a Heidelberg tinsmith; her trial had been short and correct, and had ended with her commitment to jail.

"It seems to run in your family," said Kellermann, paying her as much of a compliment as he ever did. His natural caution was abating. He was beginning to transfer some of his feelings for the Professor onto her. "You deserve better than this," he said gruffly. "We must get out of there—you, me, all of us."

She agreed, certainly. A few hours in the Lower Depths had been enough. This was no place for her.

"You and I," she advanced carefully, "*we* could make it. From the little I've seen of Kremmen, there's enough around for two people who're smart and determined not to get lost...."

... He explained his scheme. A great big health resort with large windows and light and sun porches; food and nursing care for the victims of the camps and jails; workshops to train them in new and useful jobs; courses in the processes of democracy and administration...

It wasn't imagination the girl lacked. She said. "I want that. I want that very much. And I'm going to get it. And I'll have it long before you ever do, but not by waiting for the scum in here to pull themselves together. I'm young and I've got all it takes. You're a dreamer, Rudolf Kellermann. Why don't you get wise...?"

Kellermann winced. The Lower Depths crashed back on him. He saw her leave. He didn't even feel sorry.

To Yates, it was Paula Camp without the SS; it was the Verdun DP Camp without the open sky above the barracks.

Yates and Karen walked fast, without looking back; they didn't talk; there was nothing to say; he gripped Karen's elbow and drove her along. Eventually, they found Kellermann, sitting on his bunk where Marianne had left him. Yates chased everyone else out of the room; the inmates obeyed grudgingly, like whipped mongrels.

"You don't remember me?" Yates said. "We met in Neustadt. I'm glad you got through that all right. What are you doing now?"

Kellermann had got up and was standing listlessly.

"So you've come to Kremmen," Yates went on, just to say something. He felt Kellermann's unspoken questions: What do you want here? Going slumming? Seeing how low people can sink? Checking up on what you haven't done?

The sureness left Yates. "I don't know," he said deep from his chest. "Everything's cock-eyed! And you, why haven't you come to us? We're trying to find Germans we can trust!"

"The way I look?" asked Kellermann.

They would have thrown him out, Yates knew it. The remnant of a man, shaggy hair, stubbled beard, inflamed

eyes, shoes in tatters, the striped pajamas from Paula shredded and mended and torn again.

• "Didn't anyone issue you clothing? Shoes?"

"No. But what does *she* want?" By a slight motion of his head he pointed at Karen.

Yates gave Kellermann a light. "Miss Wallace is from an American newspaper. She wants to find out what happened to you fellows. A story."

Kellermann studied her. "A story? There is no story. Nothing has changed here in Kremmen."

• "Maybe the story is that nothing has changed." Yates became conscious that in his split-second answer he had stated the whole case.

Kellermann laughed softly. "I came to the Welfare office. The same official sat there who refused us dole under the Republic, who denounced us to the Nazis under Hitler. Now he's sending us to live in the Lower Depths."

"Don't you think we'd clean him out if it were brought to our attention?"

"Herr Bendel is there on Mayor Lämmlein's authority. All important officials are."

"Give us some credit, Herr Kellermann. I can try to understand."

"You've lost a lot of credit," said Kellermann. "You had all the credit in the world. . . . It isn't me at all. It's many people—thousands, tens of thousands—people who would help you to remake this country into something decent. . . . No, Lieutenant, I don't think I'll accept your charity. I'll leave this place when everybody else is getting out of it."

• "What would you want us to do, Herr Kellermann?"

Kellermann was in a dilemma. It was easy to outline a utopian scheme to a girl like Marianne—but dreams were not blueprints. "Take us—take us out of here!" he stammered. "A big house for all—trees—light—rehabilitation—classes—workshops. . ." He saw he had to curb himself, to form coherent sentences. He clasped his hands. "You see—give

us one of those estates—the Rintelen estate, for instance, we'll run it all right."

Willoughby received Karen and Yates in the conference room of Military Government.

The bell tinkled. It was still swinging in Willoughby's hand when the wings of the main door parted and the Germans filed in, shepherded by Loomis. They took their stand behind the chairs, Lammlein at the foot of the table directly opposite Willoughby. They bowed toward Willoughby. At a sign from Loomis, they pushed back the chairs and hurriedly sat down, very constrained, very straight, their faces charged with the dignity of the occasion.

"That's my Chamber of Commerce," Willoughby whispered to Karen. "Solid people, aren't they?"

He placed the bell next to the ash tray. "Good morning, gentlemen!"

"Good morning, *Herr Oberstleutnant!*" they answered, almost in unison.

"This is Lieutenant Yates, editor of the new Kremmen paper," said Willoughby, "and this is Miss Wallace of the American press. Loomis, will you introduce the Mayor and the directors of the Chamber?"

Loomis got up and rattled off a list of names and the various trades represented. Each man stood up as his name was called, bowed toward Willoughby, and sat down again.

"What's the order of business?" asked Willoughby.

Mayor Lammlein pulled an elegant briefcase from the floor and laid it carefully on the table. Then he took a key ring out of his pocket, picked over several keys, meticulously selected the right one, unlocked the briefcase, took out a sheet of paper, and read a list of items, first in English, then in German. The nine directors of the Chamber of Commerce nodded at each item—every one of which Yates found piddling. He leaned over to Willoughby and whispered, "What about the Rintelen Works?"

Willoughby frowned. "Not on the agenda!"

"On," said Yates. "When is it coming up?"

"Patience! Patience!" whispered Willoughby.

A bald-headed, pompous man with a gold chain across his vest was reading figures. He represented the Coaldealers' Association of Kremmen; he was bemoaning the fact that the number of licenses would have to be restricted, first, because there was so little coal available, secondly, because the business was crowded anyhow.

Willoughby murmured approvingly. "Will you ask him, Lämmlein, whether he has worked out a list of people who should get licenses?"

The representative of the Coaldealers' Association had prepared precisely such a list, and he began to read firm names and addresses. When he had finished, he looked questioningly at Lämmlein. Lämmlein looked at Willoughby.

Willoughby, to whose heart one Kremmen coaldealer was as dear as the next, said, "Shall we give them the licenses?"

"I think so," said Lämmlein.

"All right," said Willoughby, "next point."

"Question!" said Yates.

"Question?" said Willoughby. He reached for the bell and toyed with it. Then he sighed. "Go ahead. But make it brief. We've got a hell of a long agenda."

"How old is your Coaldealers' Association?" Yates spoke English, he wanted neither Lämmlein nor the man with the gold chain to know that he was able to check on any variance in their statements.

The representative of the Association, after having received the translation of the question, said, "*Fünfzig Jahre*," and Lämmlein said, "Fifty years."

"You have worked as usual during the last thirteen years?"

"Yes, as usual."

"Does the Association have the same officers now that it had during the last thirteen years?"

The representative of the Association didn't like this harping on the last thirteen years. They were the years un-

der the Nazis. "There was one change. The secretary of the Association died of angina in 1938."

"The Association, like every other organization, worked according to National Socialist principles?"

"We had to!" said the bald-headed man. His pate had assumed a pinkish hue, and tiny drops of sweat glistened on it.

"If you restrict the number of licensed coaldealers, from what viewpoint do you select the licenses?"

The answer, this time, came directly from Lämmlein, "Business stability."

Willoughby cleared his throat. He felt he had permitted enough of this.

But Yates didn't take the hint. Yates hammered away. "Don't you think that the same people who ran your Coaldealers' Association and your Chamber of Commerce, under the Nazis, now, by assigning licenses, usurp an even greater power over the lives of the Community?"

It was Loomis who dispelled the cloud—perhaps because he had not even noticed how heavy and black it was. He said, "Wait a minute—as you see, nothing is done without our approval!"

"*Jawohl!*" confirmed Lämmlein, visibly eased, and hurriedly put Loomis's statement into German. The directors of the Chamber of Commerce looked up, and at each other, mumbling approval. Willoughby put the broken pencil aside, turned to Yates and asked, suppressing the sarcasm he could have used cheaply, "Satisfied?"

Yates said nothing.

Willoughby continued with the agenda.

Farrish came in during a routine report on the liquidation of the Kremmen Nazi party bookstore.

Lämmlein heard the commotion at the door and stopped dead. It was the first time he had seen the General, and the thrill he felt almost jerked up his hand, but he remembered in time, and merely stood at respectful attention. The others, too, had risen.

Willoughby, proud, and with just enough restraint to make Farrish feel that he had stepped into a beehive of important activity, reported that he was conducting a conference with the local Chamber of Commerce.

"Chamber of Commerce!" said Farrish. "Like back home, huh?"

He roared at his own joke, and everybody, including the Germans who hadn't understood him, snickered obligingly.

"Sit down, everybody!" Willoughby ordered. "Loomis, have chairs brought in for the General's staff!"

Then he said, "Perhaps the General would like to address a few remarks to the Germans here who are, in a fashion, the leading citizens of this district?"

He rose.

"The Colonel here has asked me to say a few words to you. I might as well. I want you to know what I feel about this occupation business, and what I want you to do. I think you all know who I am and what I've done in the past. Now, we've come here to teach you something about democracy. Democracy, that's the rule of the common man; everybody has equal rights. Is that clear? Are there any questions?" There were, of course, no questions.

"Well, we have a hell of a situation here, what with practically the whole city in ruins, and the morale of the people in a sad shape. You can't even drive through the streets without getting the stench of it. We're going to change all that. I have the best Division in the United States Army, and I'm going to have the best Occupation area in Germany."

The Germans approved of the General's regional patriotism.

"Now about de-Nazification. I have orders from Supreme Headquarters to clean out every God-damned Nazi. I'm known for carrying through my orders regardless of cost—and this isn't going to cost us a thing!" He interrupted himself, leaned down to Karen, and said, "Well put, huh?" Then he straightened himself, and knocked the handle



of his crop on the flat of the table. "We're going to clean the Nazis out of everything! I'm going to have the most de-Nazified area in Germany! That'll give you people a chance to straighten yourselves out with your God, who certainly didn't approve of this Nazi business—and with us, who don't approve of it either."

He paused and glared at his audience, supporting himself by placing the knuckles of his strong fists on the table. The Germans held to discreet attention.

"Well, Willoughby," asked Farrish, "is there anything else you want me to tell these Krauts?"<sup>11</sup>

Willoughby complimented the General on the speech and said he had covered the whole subject, and that his words would have an excellent effect.

The suit and her down-at-the-heels shoes were Marianne's entire capital. She had amassed it, at the Lower Depths, through the ex-procurer Balduin, who, for services rendered, had presented her with a stolen radio. She had gone to the black market and had haggled hard and had finally traded the radio for her present get-up.<sup>12</sup>

So, complete with her clipping of Dr. Gross's letter on the Seckendorff family and the Munich students' revolt, she was ushered in to Yates.

With a pretty hesitancy, she handed him a slip of paper.

He read the mimeographed document—*Release from Concentration Camp Buchenwald*, signed by a Lieutenant Farquhart, MC,<sup>13</sup> and with her name entered in ink, *Marianne Seckendorff*.

He looked up. "Well—if you're from Munich, what are you doing here, in Kremen?"

She raised her hand in a forlorn little gesture. "It makes no difference where I stay. I have nobody in Munich, no relatives, no friends."

She was entering on dangerous ground. Her eyes grew intent and crossed slightly. "I would like to stay in Kremen, if I could. Here . . ."

She took out the clipping, and handed it to him, shyly. He glanced at it and asked her to sit down. "You aren't related to Professor Seckendorff?"

"He's my uncle."

"Have you been to the hospital? How's he getting along?"

She said sadly, "I've tried. But they didn't let me see him. Rules."

"I could probably arrange for you to visit him!"

She murmured that he was so kind!

"Before you go, remind me to give you a note to Dr. Gross. Tell me," Yates said, "about yourself! How did the police catch you?"

"Not with the leaflets," she said with a sly pride. "Not with any of the other people who were involved. But they were after the whole family—you know what they did to my uncle."

"Yes. And what did they do to you?"

"I'd rather not talk about it."

"You can tell me," he said. "I saw Paula Concentration Camp when our troops came in."

Marianne appraised the American. She had come to him because the clipping had been a natural lead to the newspaper office. She had not expected to be tested so soon in the game; but the test had to come some time; and if she established herself now, the thing would be over and done with. If only he weren't such a fish! If only he reacted in some way! She was relying on her body to cover any holes in her story.

"They didn't break any bones. They didn't even scratch my skin. First they tried it with light. Day and night the light in my face till I thought I'd go blind or crazy with headache, and I wished I'd go blind. I didn't confess. Thank God, I had nothing to confess."

"The worst night came in early March. They came into my cell and forced me to undress. Four of them. I thought this was the end. But they didn't touch me. They led me

along a corridor into another cell. There stood a big wooden vat, filled with water. Slabs of ice swam on top of it. It was like knives. Thousands of knives, stabbing, cutting. A terrible, unbearable, exquisite pain."

The *exquisite* registered. He believed the scene, every word of it; it was too detailed to be invented.

"And then?" patiently.

"I must have fainted, slipped. I came to in my cell. They had taken away my blanket, the window was open. I was covered with ice. Or it felt like ice. I don't know. Then I was sick, for weeks, in the prison hospital..."

"My feeling is that somebody must have given the order not to mar my body..." And she added, "It isn't marred."

Yates considered this information. All he need do was date her up. It was as simple as that. This is what she had come here for. And she was pretty enough not to disgrace him.

Except that it was too simple. Too simple and too cheap.

"I'm happy that you're physically all right," he said. "What can I do for you?"

"With my record, things are very difficult," she said. "The Nazi Government is gone—but..."

He knew that, too. The Lämmlein regime made rehabilitation a personal venture. Some set out on this way, like this girl; others refused to take it, like Kellermann. Well, if you followed her approach and accepted the world as it was, you had to make the best of it. But this best wasn't quite good enough for Yates.

"The Americans..." she said hopefully.

"The Americans are your best bet?" He switched languages. "Do you speak English?"

"Yes, a little. I have learned in school."

"Can you type?"

"Yes, oh yes. But not too quick."

"I can't give you a job here," he said, "but I'll give you a letter to Captain Loomis at Military Government. Maybe you'll have better luck with him."

Then he gave her the letter, and returned the discharge slip from Buchenwald. She was already at the door when he called her back.

"You forgot something, Marianne!"

Her face was a blank.

"I thought you wanted to visit your uncle in the hospital?" he said.

He was already penning the note to Dr. Gross he had promised her, and he didn't watch her. He didn't have to. He had made up his mind to give Loomis a ring and ask him to have her checked through Counter-Intelligence.

Lämmlein was closeted with Willoughby.

"I want absolute cooperation. I don't mind your building your own little machine in Kremmen, as long as I control it. I want no monkey business behind my back."

"No monkey business," Lämmlein assured him. "I know my place."

Willoughby noticed the direct quote from Farrish, and he looked at Lämmlein, trying to fathom what lay behind the gray complexion.

"Of course it is very difficult," Lämmlein said slowly, "to do right by you, sir, if one is continually exposed to all sorts of pressures. We are the vanquished, we have to obey—but what are we to do if we're caught between conflicting interests?"

"What I say, goes!" Willoughby stated sourly. "Who's been pressuring you?"

Lämmlein appeared to squirm in the throes of divided loyalties. "You probably know all about it, sir. I can't imagine he proposed it to me without your approval!"

Willoughby squinted. "Who—proposed—what?"

"Captain Loomis, sir!" Lämmlein threw himself into a rush of apologies.

Willoughby suspected that Lämmlein was trying to split the ranks of Military Government. "So?" he asked. "What about Captain Loomis? Get to the point."

"Captain Loomis has laid a 10 per cent tax on all business establishments he permits to be licensed."

Willoughby got out of his seat. He stepped to the window. The two hundred thousand people left in Kremmen had to trade somewhere, they had to start making some sort of living, had to produce something to sell or exchange. It was such a simple, logical idea, this racket of Loomis's—too simple, too logical, perhaps, for Willoughby to have thought it up himself.

Willoughby turned and caught Lämmlein in an expectant smile.

"Such a tax," Willoughby stated matter-of-factly, "is discretionary" with the local Military Government. It helps to curb inflationary tendencies by drawing off surplus cash.<sup>15</sup> You Germans ought to appreciate it—you had a runaway inflation in 1923."

"The payments are to be made to Captain Loomis?" inquired Lämmlein, his smile having vanished completely.

"Yes, of course!" Willoughby seemed a trifle annoyed. "He is accountable to me!"

They called it *Club Matador*, in honor of Farrish and his Division, and to attract the American men and officers on the loose in the ruins of Kremmen. They served wines and liquors, which were pretty good since they came out of stolen stock through the black market, and thin beer that didn't sell too well. The prices were outrageous, even for American pockets; they had to cover not only Loomis's rake-off,<sup>16</sup> but the city taxes and the Reich taxes that went into a reparations fund, and the black market profits, and then some for Herr Weiner, the proprietor, and for the syndicate of which he was the front man and in which Mayor Lämmlein also had a finger. But the place was jammed.

Loomis, crowded against Marianne, and she against Willoughby, sat at a corner table, hemmed in by two German couples

Loomis noticed that Marianne inclined more and more toward Willoughby. Look at the way they danced! How she clung to Willoughby!

They came back to the table, breathless, holding hands. Loomis managed a lop-sided smile.

"The Colonel dances very good," she said, pronouncing Willoughby's rank as *Colonöll* and rolling the R in *very*.

The music started up again; Willoughby nodded to Marianne, and they wedged themselves in between the dancers. Loomis stared at the empty glasses, the dishes on which the sauce had jelled, the pale pink spots the wine had left on the tablecloth.

He got up and walked heavily over to the dance floor, pushed his way through to Willoughby and tapped his shoulder.

"I want to talk to you."

"Now?"

"Now."

"Pardon me!" said Willoughby. Carefully, with intimate protectiveness, he led Marianne back to the table.

"Well—what is it about?"

So Loomis blurted out, "She's my girl, see? I found her, I fixed her up," and I'm going to keep her."

Willoughby's squat finger beat out a tattoo on the tablecloth. "Don't be a fool, don't get your bowels in an uproar, take it like a gentleman. The town is full of women, and you can have them for a pack of cigarettes."

Loomis got up. "Marianne!" he ordered, "we're leaving!"

Willoughby put his hand on her shoulder. "She likes it here. She will leave when I consider the evening ended. And with me."

Loomis leaned over the table. His hand went to Willoughby's collar and began to pull.

Willoughby took a spoon and rapped his knuckles. "Sit down!"

The sharp rap hurt Loomis. It brought back a spark of sense.

"I don't want any trouble," said Willoughby. "Not with you or anyone else. But if you want trouble, you can have it. I've been patient about a lot of things. When I pay the bill here, I know I'll be overpaying because you're getting a 10 per cent cut. You're getting a 10 per cent cut out of everything that operates in this town."

Loomis's shoulders slumped.

"I don't mind your soaking the Krauts. But from now on, you'll share, and share alike. From now on, also, you will know your place."

Now Willoughby was faced with the problem of employing Marianne usefully. Even if she slept until noon, he did not believe that a girl should spend the balance of her day in idleness. Left to her own devices, she might get ideas about what was good for her. He knew human nature; he knew the devilish itch that so easily gets under the smoothest, best-cared-for skin and makes you feel that perhaps, just around the corner, something a little better, a little richer, a little spicier is waiting for you.

But he did have a job for her. He created the job. He went out to the Widow and persuaded her that she needed a house companion. He said he was concerned about her being alone so far away from town with only her daughter and the invalid Major Dehn. He told her of Marianne's sufferings, of the ice vat. "Every good German should make efforts to atone for that kind of thing, if you know what I mean." But in the end, he had to override the Widow's and Pamela's protests with: "Why do you go out of your way to make things difficult for me and for yourselves? There are many Americans who want me to requisition your whole estate."

"*Requisition?*" the Widow piped.

"Requisition, confiscate, take away." He cupped his hand and led it over Maximilian von Rintelen's desk in a sweeping motion. "*Phhhht*—gone, *kaputt!* Rintelen, manor house, all!"

And on this sunny Sunday morning, no cloud in the peaceful blue sky, he was driving Marianne in his open

touring car, beyond the confines of the city, off the main highway, onto a macadam road that ran through mangy fields, past scrubby hills, and into the neatly planted, nurtured forest of young pines that was the Rintelen estate.

"They may not like me here," Marianne said suddenly.

He kissed her tenderly. "Don't you worry, Honey. They'll dance when you whistle And like it."

She laughed and whistled and danced a few steps over the piny ground.

God, she's beautiful! he thought, and he was very happy.

Pettinger, watching them from the curtained window of his upstairs room, thought she was beautiful, too.

The rot of boredom was fastening itself on Pettinger. The network he was trying to create wove itself, but at snail's pace.

Too rarely for Pettinger's limited patience, Lämmlein would bring messages from men contacted after prolonged effort. These fugitives in hiding, who were trying to reestablish connections, to set up groups and organizations, let Pettinger know that they agreed with his plan. They agreed that dissatisfaction was growing rife in the occupied area. But they complained that the majority of the population was too concerned with personal problems to do much except grumble. However, they were doing their best in spreading anti-Russian rumors and in working on the American troops through women and other civilian contacts.

Pettinger studied every newspaper he could get, English or German. He approved of the disputes among the Allies that came in the wake of the San Francisco Conference. Every conflict in the Allied Control Council gave him a dose of hope—but everything was so slow, so damnably slow.

After Willoughby had deposited Marianne and was gone, Pamela rushed to Pettinger's room, agitation, hatred, fear plainly written on her face.

"She's a spy!"



"I know something about spies, my dear," Pettinger replied. "The ones I had to deal with were never that pretty."

"You've seen her already?"

"From a distance."

"And right out of a concentration camp, though she doesn't look it. With American food and stolen clothes—no wonder."

"They are up and we are down," Pettinger said philosophically. "It'll be a pleasure to have her locked up once more."

"When?" she demanded. "When?"

He had no ready timetable, just a vague promise.

DeWitt encountered Willoughby on entering the perpetual semidarkness of the dining room of Kremmen's Grand Hotel. DeWitt stopped at the door and asked Willoughby, "How's Yates working out? Is he helping you at all?"

Willoughby knew that DeWitt would take any derogatory remark coming from him as a point in Yates's favor. "I don't see how I could run the town without his paper. Of course, he's still inclined to be radical, but that's just what we need. Military Government, Colonel, is a heavy work horse, it must get the whip sometimes."

"I'm expecting to have dinner with Captain Troy and Miss Wallace—you probably know them. If I'd been informed in advance of your arrival, sir, I would have reserved the evening for you..."

"I don't know them—but let's all get together, anyhow!" said DeWitt, and waved Yates over.

Soon after, Troy and Karen arrived.

"The four of us are alumni<sup>18</sup> of Paula Camp," joked Willoughby to the Colonel; but since no one wanted to talk of that experience, the soup was eaten in silence.

"The General is very proud of the things you've done," DeWitt said to Willoughby.

Willoughby replied with studied affability, "We all work together. Troy has built an excellent police force, and I think

that Yates's paper has an appreciable effect on the Germans. . . . All toward the same end."

Yates leaned forward. "I print your handouts<sup>19</sup> faithfully, if that's what you mean."

"They're necessary," said Willoughby "I thought we had made an agreement, Yates—I handle Military Government affairs, and you write about them—favorably, if you please!"

"That about outlines your job," said DeWitt.

"I know!" The bitter lines around Yates's lips deepened. "I impose my own censorship! . . . What I see in the Lower Depths I can't print, because it would be a disgrace to the Army. The story that I should print--what we're going to do with the Rintelen Works—I can't get, although that's what the people need to know. It's their livelihood! Are *we* going to run the Works? Will the remaining machinery be dismantled? Destroyed? Rebuilt? All of it? Or only a part? And who's going to own it? The Rintelen family? The Allies? The people?"

The waiter served dessert and coffee. Everybody fell silent. Then Willoughby said with a grating laugh, "You're one for the books, Yates!"

DeWitt put a cherry pit on his spoon. "Well, what *are* you going to do with the Rintelen Works?"

"The very question is out of our reach! We're faced with practical problems. Let somebody in Washington worry about policy. Who are we. . . ?"

Yates said, "You used to talk differently, Colonel Willoughby. Once you even gave me your very concrete opinions on why the American people sent its armies across the ocean. . . ."

"Why?" said DeWitt.

Willoughby threw his napkin on the table. "Lieutenant Yates—I've suspected it for the longest time—now I know it. You hobnobbed with the Russians as far back as Verdun! Kavalov, or whatever his name was. You're a Communist. You're dangerous. You don't belong in this army—"

"Stop it, Willoughby!" DeWitt put down his cup. His brows were low and straight as a gray furrow. "A man's entitled to his opinions, even in the Army. And if you don't like Yates's questions, that doesn't make him a Communist or anything like it."

Willoughby rose. "Sir, I am perfectly willing to talk over this matter with you, privately."

"I see nothing that needs any confidential discussion."

"All right." Willoughby nodded slowly. "I see how you feel. Then will you excuse me? I have an appointment."

"Sure! Toddle along!... No, don't bother. I'll take care of the check."

Troy caught Willoughby just as he was leaving his room. Willoughby was wearing greens, garrison hat and all his ribbons. His blouse bulged from the pistol he carried under his armpit. He had never fired it. He had never been close enough to where he would have had to fire it; but he felt safer carrying it around.

"Sir, I want to ask you something."

"Ask your questions during office hours!" said Willoughby, still blocked by Troy's broad chest.

"Just a little bet I've made." Troy cocked his head ironically.

"You're drunk," said Willoughby. "All right, walk me down the stairs."

Troy about-faced and let Willoughby emerge from his room. Then he put his big arm around Willoughby's shoulder and hoarsely whispered to him, "What about the Rintelen estate? I wanted to stick all those guys from the concentration camps in there—remember, sir?"

"Yes, I remember." Willoughby was on his way to the estate. He should.

"When can I start moving them?"

Willoughby freed himself from Troy's embrace. "Captain, I will not be pressured!"

"All I want is a clear answer," Troy pleaded drunkenly. "Are you requisitioning the property?"

"Who sent you?" Willoughby was outraged. Yates, again. Now that DeWitt was here, Yates figured he could go ahead with his little schemes of making the world a cushiony place for the underdog and of making life unpleasant for Willoughby.

Willoughby tried to shove Troy aside.

Troy didn't budge. "I just want an answer, and I want it straight. No excuses, no dilly-dallying, no phony promises. We've been given too much of that stuff, and we've been handing out too much of it. Do I get the Rintelen estate, and when?"

"I'll have you out of MG tomorrow!" Willoughby's voice grated.

"Thank you, sir," Troy said evenly. "That's as good an answer as any."

He let Willoughby pass and followed him slowly.

Then he returned to the bar and sat down, heavily, in the same narrow chair next to Karen's.

"Waiter!" he called. "Three up!" His hand shook.

Karen and Yates saw how disturbed he was.

"What did you do?" asked Yates.

"I got myself fired. Blew my top. Thank you. It was a swell idea."

Yates felt let-down. He could talk, talk, talk. And here was a man who did something. And look at him!

"I guess I'll be out of my job tomorrow," Troy said and began to laugh tonelessly. "I don't give a damn. The wonderful thing in the Army is that they can't fire you; they've got to provide a spot for you.

"Don't worry! I'll get this estate out of him if it's the last thing I do. When I was looking at his fat mug, it came to me—why I have to do it. Things have to add up, don't they? A victory is a glorious thing, something men died for --and what we've got isn't glorious. . . ."

Karen wished he would ask her now if she loved him. Now she would tell him.

But he was wrapped up in the new ideas he had

found. She could see the labor of his mind on his broad face.

Yates was the only one considering the matter soberly and practically. "What are we going to do about it?" he asked.

"Do? Nothing! Let it ride!"

Yates said sharply, "It isn't you, and it isn't your job. Can't you get that into your head? It's the Rintelen estate. It's whether Willoughby is right or I am, and Bing, and a lot of other fellows whose names I don't even know and who believed that they were fighting for something new. . . . If I can print in my paper next week that the Rintelen estate has been handed over to former concentration camp prisoners, it's going to spell something to the Germans—that we mean business with our democracy. The hell with your job."

Without waiting for an answer, Yates went to the house phone and called DeWitt's room. Returning, he said, "The Old Man's still up. Couldn't sleep, I suppose. He wants us to bring a bottle."

They got a bottle of cognac from the waiter and trooped upstairs. DeWitt, in a creased blue dressing gown, sat on the only chair in the dismal room. His eyes were red-rimmed; the straggly gray hair on his chest came through his open shirt.

"Sit on the bed," he invited.

Yates gave the Colonel the facts. DeWitt listened quietly, now and then sipping his cognac, and smacking his lips.

After Yates had finished, he said, "I'm afraid there's nothing I can do."

"You could see the General!" said Karen, more sharply than she had intended.

"With what, Miss Wallace? There's no law that the Army must evict industrialists' widows from their homes. The care of former concentration camp prisoners is strictly a matter for the German authorities."

"Sir!" said Yates. "We have an obligation. When we pull out of here, finally, we want to leave behind a country

minus the bastards who forced this war, their power smashed. A new kind of country. An American experiment."

"Who's experimenting?" asked DeWitt. "General Farrish?"

Tiredly, DeWitt said, "Give me something to go on! What is it about this Rintelen estate that makes it such a problem? We've taken over many buildings we wanted; a signature is all that's needed. And I know Willoughby! I know he goes out of his way to do his men favors if he can afford them. He would be the first one to tell Froy, 'Take the estate! Set yourself up in it! But he's not saying it. Why?'"

It was the key question. And Yates saw that DeWitt was honestly wanting an answer, but they could not supply it.

"We have come to make a report," said Kellermann.

The wind went out of Yates's sails. He was unable to do anything about the conditions that forced the two men from Paula Camp to come begging to him, but he had wanted to give them some encouragement. And now, they, too, came to him with a *report*.

"It's one of my jobs to listen to reports," he said, not bothering to hide his disappointment.

Kellermann began, "There's a girl, Marianne Seckendorff—"

"Marianne Seckendorff?" Yates turned to the old man. "I gave your niece a note to Dr. Gross."

"She is not my niece," said Seckendorff.

"She isn't his niece," Kellermann repeated; "she isn't related to him at all. I met her at the Lower Depths. She said she handed out leaflets in Munich. She spoke of the Professor's children as if they had been her closest friends. Then she left the Lower Depths and I heard she got herself some job with your Military Government. . . . I thought seeing her might do the Professor some good—so I told him about her. Well—" He stopped, and with a nod at the old man— "You see, she cashed in<sup>29</sup> on his children. . . ."

"I don't even know where they are buried," Seckendorff said tonelessly.

I told them at MG to check up! Yates thought. Why hadn't they?... But they must have.

Yates moved uncomfortably in his chair. If he tried to stop the girl now from whatever she was doing, he would end up as a publicly confessed fool, and Willoughby would certainly make the best use of it.

He reached for his telephone and dialed Loomis.

Loomis didn't seem any too pleased.

"Remember that girl I sent you, about a month ago—Marianne Seckendorff?"

He believed he heard Loomis gasp.

"Was she ever checked through by Counter-Intelligence?"

"How do I know?" Loomis came back belligerently. "I put through a request. What more do you want me to do?"

"Any results?"

"Not that I know. Why should they tell me? Go ask Willoughby!"

For a moment, Yates was ilabbergasted. Then he said, "Why Willoughby? What's she got to do with him?"

He heard Loomis laugh at the other end of the wire. The laughter was followed by a sneering, "Wouldn't you like to know?" and by something sung in an outrageous falsetto. But the words were clear: "My Heart Belongs to Daddy."

Softly, Yates replaced the receiver. For a while he sat silent, lost in thought. What woke him was Kellermann's light cough. "Lieutenant, do you still need us?"

"Yes," said Yates with sudden resolution, "I do." Again, he dialed, and when he had established his connection he said into the phone: "Troy?—Yates. . . . Yes, I'm dandy. Say, I want you to do some fast checking. . . . Top Secret, just between you and me. . . . Dame named Marianne Seckendorff. . . . Supposed to have been gone over by CIC.<sup>21</sup> . . . Find out where she keeps herself and what she means to our mutual friend W. . . . I'll be over at your place in twenty minutes. Can you get going right away? . . . Yes? Wonderful. . . . Roger. Out."

Troy reached for a folder which was marked, in big black letters, MARIANNE SECKENDORFF—*Investigation*. He gave Yates a broad grin and said, "You don't want me to enter that, do you?"

"Don't try to be funny," Yates said darkly. "We're a prize bunch of boobies, all of us—and I don't see why you're so damned placid about it."

"How was I to know that your face was going to be red, too?" Troy asked innocently.

"You were supposed to know everything!" Yates came back. "Why wasn't she checked through CIC? She was on your pay roll, wasn't she?"

Troy raised his big hands, expressively. "Brother, I get my requests through channels. I get them from Willoughby. I was never ordered to look into the matter. This is the Army! So don't get excited."

"But you yourself said—"

Troy wiped his broad forehead. "Listen, Yates. You called me half an hour ago." His big hand came down on the folder. "And I started this thing right away. I've been running around ever since. And now we have something to go on. We know from the Civilian Motor Pool<sup>22</sup> that your Marianne—"

"Don't call her my Mariannel!"

"All right. We know that Marianne Seckendorff lives out at the Rintelen estate. We know that Willoughby has placed her there. We know that almost every night he either goes out there himself or sends out a driver to pick her up. And we know that she's been making fools out of us—most of all, out of Willoughby. What do you suggest now?"

"You're the Public Safety Officer," Yates said with relish. "You decide."

Troy said, "I'd like to pick her up at that manor house, bring her down here, and let you take her through the paces."

Sticking his fist directly into Willoughby's hornet's nest of personal relationships, plans, games, and combinations meant open war. And at some point, he and Troy might run



up against Farrish. He needed some backing; at least some moral backing.

Over cocktails, before dinner, he and Troy talked to DeWitt and gave him whole picture. DeWitt asked many questions. His most important question was: "Do you two boys know what you're letting yourselves in for?"

Yales answered for both of them, "Yes."

The crow's-feet at DeWitt's eyes deepened with his smile. "Then let's have a showdown," he said.

It was a red-letter day for Willoughby.

The General, for once, had not bothered him. At the Offices of Military Government, everything had gone as it should, which enabled Willoughby to take off at five and be ready to receive Lämmlein in his room at the Grand Hotel. And Marianne was due to spend the night with him.

Lämmlein arrived on the dot. The Mayor was carrying a sepia morocco leather briefcase, stamped with Willoughby's initials in gold.

"The Briefcase," said Lämmlein, "is a token of the appreciation the people of Kremmen feel for their Military Governor. The contents, sir, are in the nature of reparations. Frau von Rintelen, the family, and myself are happy to restore to their rightful owner the purloined shares of the Rintelen Works, together with all papers pertaining to them. Do you care to go through them?"

"Of course I do!" said Willoughby jovially. "It's a beautiful bag you gave me, but I'd still like to have a look at the call!"

For a good while, the two men were busy examining documents, counting stiff sheets of special bond paper,<sup>23</sup> jotting down figures, adding, and checking. Then dusk fell. Willoughby heaved a deep sigh, gathered the papers, locked the briefcase, and stowed it away among his long johns in his pack.

Lämmlein rose, empty-handed. "We have fulfilled our obligations," he said pompously, and yet not quite certainly.

"O. K., Lämmlein my boy! You've done well by everybody!"

"I am still Mayor only *pro tem.*"...

Lämmlein ceased being the submissive German official. "I am ready to go ahead with production at the Works. I need full power from you. We've given you a lot, sir. The rest belongs to us. Agreed?"

"Tomorrow!" said Willoughby. "Tomorrow everything will be taken care of." And as Lämmlein still hesitated, he took him firmly by the shoulder and ushered him to the door.

The slight beginning of a dispute failed to have effect on Willoughby's good mood.

Willoughby saw prosperity around the corner. He counted the months he would have to stay on in Germany, after his return from Paris. Six months, at most. Then back to CBR & W. The war, after all, had been a good investment. Some people went in for paintings and diamonds, others collected cameras, or sold soap and chocolate and cigarettes to the Germans. Small fry, breaking the law for petty booty. Laws were not made to be broken, laws were made to stay within. He had always maintained that war was like peace; except that in war the stakes were bigger, the opportunities greater, and the decisions you were called upon to make far graver. But aside from that—everything was connections and thinking three moves ahead and using the brains God gave you, in Indiana or in the Ruhr.

And the evening with Marianne lay ahead of him. He'd have dinner for two served in the room.

In the end, Pamela caught Pettinger red-handed.

He followed after her when she walked off, having had her say. For the rest of the afternoon, he didn't let her out of his sight. Repeatedly, he made attempts at conciliation, sometimes in a humorous vein, sometimes sentimentally, once falling back on the old Nazi theory that it was the

duty of a superior man to perpetuate the race regardless of outdated ethics.

"Don't tell me you planned to present Willoughby with a bastard," Pamela said to that.

The Widow, vaguely wondering what had happened but not sufficiently aroused to inquire, kept the radio playing. Pamela pretended to read.

"Where are you going?" Pettinger jumped up as Pamela left her chair.

"To my room, if I may!" she said sarcastically. "I wish to lie down. Do you object?"

Breathlessly, Pamela reached the main highway to Kremmen and caught the streetcar at the end of the line. She stayed on the platform where it was darker. The car was rattling into town. Few people rode it, that near to curfew.<sup>23</sup>

"Where is Military Government?" Pamela asked the conductress.

"*Die Militär-Regierung?*" The conductress, in her worn-out uniform, looked suspiciously at the hefty, sweating woman with her hair and dress awry. "I'll tell you where to get out." And she did, obviously glad to be rid of the passenger.

Somebody rapped at the door, loudly, insistently. Willoughby jumped up.

"Damn it! What's the matter with that waiter? The moment you're kind to those Krauts, they get insolent. . . ." He opened the door. "Troy! What the hell—"

He recognized Yates behind Troy.

"What do you two want? I'm busy."

"Marianne Seckendorff in this room, sir?" asked Troy.

Yates said, "She's in there all right. We know it from the desk.<sup>24</sup> We'd like to see her, sir."

"What for?"

"To arrest her, sir."

Willoughby drew himself up in indignation. "What's it all about?" he snapped. "Which of you two cooked it up?"

Marianne smiled, first at Troy, then at Yates. "Good evening," she said sweetly, "how do you do?"

"We're doing fine," said Yates. Then he turned to Willoughby. "Sorry to intrude on your privacy, sir. We'll just take the young lady along, and there'll be no further disturbance."

"I asked you some questions, Lieutenant!"

"We've been ordered to pick up Fräulein Seckendorff," said Yates. "It's an investigation."

Willoughby did one of his fast switches. His face settled in an expression of friendly good-fellowship. He sat down, pushed aside the dishes on the table, pulled out a cigarette, knocked it deliberately against the nail of his thumb until the tobacco settled, and lit it.

"All right, Lieutenant Yates, I guess two can play at the game just as well as one. I am arresting Marianne Seckendorff. She's in my custody. I think that will satisfy Colonel DeWitt, won't it?"

Yates smiled, "Colonel DeWitt will appreciate your cooperation, sir. It makes it so much easier for us." His voice changed suddenly. He spoke German. "*Fräulein Seckendorff! Anziehen! Kommen Sie mit!*"

She was not taken to the gloomy star chamber she had expected, but to Yates's small office. Marianne began to relax. Yates's opening questions were friendly and pleasant.

He went back through the years. She saw Willoughby's mounting boredom; she noticed that Troy was doodling on a pad of paper, sketching little mannikins.

"Tell me about your family," Yates changed his approach.

"What do you want to know?"

"What do I want to know?" said Yates. "Everything. Your father, what was his business?"

Her father had been a tinsmith, but that wasn't enough for the brother of a Professor. He had to be something better. "He was a roofing contractor," she said.

"How was he related to Professor Seckendorff?"

"He was his brother, naturally." She smiled.

"Older? Younger?"

"The younger brother."

"Marianne—it so happens Professor Seckendorff had no brothers."

Willoughby rose angrily. "At all other times, Yates, you're a sucker for people who pretend to be victims of the Nazis. Suddenly, because I have chosen to help this particular girl, you get sceptical."

Marianne broke into a wail.

"Stop sniffing, Marianne—it's bad for your complexion. Now tell me, when did you see your uncle last?"

She blew her nose; she really had been crying. She powdered her nose.

"Come on! Come on! When was it?"

"In 1942, in Munich. Poor uncle, he was always so worried about Hans and Clara..."

Yates pressed a button under his desk. Somewhere outside, a buzzer<sup>27</sup> went off.

Then the old man came in. He blinked, uncertain of what was wanted of him, confused by the people crowding the small room. He saw the back of the girl's head, the fine shadow on her nape; he saw Willoughby, the questioning eyes above their pouches.

"Who's he?" Willoughby was asking.

Marianne turned around. She looked at Yates. She became conscious of his expression. He was watching her.

She jumped up. The old man was in her arms. He was being kissed—he reeked of bad soap and dust and disinfectant. But she kissed him. And she cried, "*Ach*, I'm so happy! So happy! Uncle, my darling!" The rest of her greeting was so fast that even Yates could not follow it.

She was overacting. Yates sensed the false note, but the false note was not enough to use as proof.

The Professor was turning from one to the other of the men. He even pleaded with Willoughby, "Sir—my children—they died a clean death—their memory, protect their memory. . . ."

"What's he saying?" asked Willoughby. "Why don't you keep these beggars out of it?"

A visitor came to Yates's office.

"I'm not going to leave, *Herr Soldat*, until I've spoken to Lieutenant Yates or Colonel Willoughby."

The orderly opened the door to Yates's office and beckoned urgently. Yates came out.

"Lieutenant, I've got Pamela Rintelen here, and I've got a statement that I've pulled out of her!"

He started to read. He sensed Yates's growing excitement, and himself began to tingle with it.

"Would you repeat the whole story? In front of Fräulein Seckendorff?"

"Would I! With pleasure. . . ."

"Fräulein Seckendorff," Yates said softly, "have you anything to say?"

He thought she would try to deny Pamela's story.

But Marianne said, "It's all true. I was arrested in Munich because I picked somebody's pocket. I'm not related to professor Seckendorff. It so happens I have the same name, there are many Seckendorffs in Germany. I read the story of the Munich revolt in your newspaper. I thought it would help me to get a job. I heard the story of the ice vat in Buchenwald. I was sent there after I finished my term in jail. What more do you want to know?"

"That's all," said Yates.

Marianne reached a conclusion. She was going to take the dagger Pamela plunged into her, and stick it right back, and twist it. If she was to be outcast, Pamela was not going to enjoy the fruits of her victory.

"I haven't finished yet," said Marianne.

"What?" said Yates.

"What about that fine son-in-law? What's he doing all day alone in his room, and nobody allowed to go in? What about this Major Dehn?"

"Major Dehn!" said Yates. "At the manor house of the estate?"

"Pamela's husband!" Marianne insisted on pronouncing the title her lover had given himself, with scornful satisfaction. "Or perhaps he isn't. He certainly didn't behave that way to me...."

Yates was hammering away at Pamela. "Your husband, Major Dehn, is dead!" Major Dehn surrendered after we crossed the Rhine. He committed suicide. I saw his body myself."

"Pamela Rintelen Dehn!" Yates demanded, "Who's the man at your house posing as your husband?"

"I don't know," Pamela said miserably.

"Colonel Willoughby—you've been out at the Rintelen house! Can you give me a description of the man they call Major Dehn?"

"Tall, smooth, bony face—"

"Does Lämmlein know him?"

"I think so...."

Lämmlein's name, suddenly injected, drove Willoughby to frenzy.

"It's never happened to me," said Yates, "never before tonight. I see the puzzle, the fragments begin to make sense, some are still missing, but the picture begins to emerge."

"What picture?" asked DeWitt, the motion of his hand indicating that he considered the results before him passable, but not overwhelming. "A pretty girl sneaked into somebody's bed under false pretenses. That's the only thing you've proved. Everything else is hints and conjectures."

"Well," said Troy, "it's a little more than that, isn't it? The 10 per cent racket of Looinis and Willoughby—good Lord, and we've come here to teach the Germans democracy!"

"Witness: Marianne Seckendorff—whom you've shown as an irresponsible liar."

"A Nazi hiding out at the Rintelen estate—Willoughby's own hangout, same place we can't pry loose from him."

"How do you know he's a Nazi?"

Yates frowned. Running his hand through his hair, he said, "I don't know, sir. Things have been piling in on me tonight, sort of. I haven't had much time to think them out."

"Think them out! Go ahead!"

"I used to have warts. I burned one out—it came back, in the same spot or somewhere else. It's a pattern. Willoughby wouldn't have done what he did unless he thought he was one of many like him, unless he felt he could get away with it. He has certain ideas about why we came to Europe. We're the champions of free enterprise—free to do what is most profitable as long as nobody conks us over the head. I used to feel we had no program. He makes me think we have one. . . ."

Yates had been speaking quietly. He was watching whether DeWitt was going along with him, or, at least, accepting his premise.

After a pause, DeWitt said, "You hate too much."

A slight smile was in Yates's eyes. "Learned it in the war, sir. I wouldn't want to forget it again for all the peace and comfort in the world."

"Let's get down to earth!" said DeWitt. "Do you think we have enough—as you put it—to conk those guys over the head?"

Yates remained serious. "I suppose we can have a local success."

"Then what are you waiting for?"

"I'm only a Lieutenant, sir—and at heart, a college instructor. And if, tomorrow, the General orders Hands Off?"

"Tomorrow is a long way off," said DeWitt. "Tomorrow I will see Farrish and some other people. Meanwhile, the night is yours."



It was about one in the morning when Lämmlein arrived at the Rintelen's manor house. He found Pettinger still awake, raking up the fine gray ashes of papers burned in his fireplace.

"So you know already...?" were Lämmlein's first words.

Pettinger pointed at the ashes. "Nothing new in my life!" He put aside the poker. "I hoped you'd come, Herr *Bürgermeister*. I'll need a local guide tonight."

... "It's easy to be important and clever," Lämmlein said "when you're in power! Anybody can do it, any postcard painter, any rabble rouser, any bum! But when you have no power—when you've got to be patient and wait and organize and plan—"

Pettinger slapped Lämmlein's face. The blow reduced Lämmlein to his proper status and re-established German discipline.

"I've killed people for saying less," informed Pettinger. "And just in case you have any notions of turning me over to the Americans and of using my body, neatly packaged, to get back in their good graces, let me throw some light on your position. Who palmed me off on Willoughby as Major Delus? You did. So we're tied together and we'll hang together if they catch me. . . . I may be in a spot, I may even have gotten myself into it—but you're going to do everything to get me out. Is that understood?"

The extent of the catastrophe caught up with Lämmlein.

"Yes," said Lämmlein. "I know a place: the old air-raid shelter under Herr von Rintelen's bombed-out office. I'll take you there. You'll stay in it for about a week—then I'll bring you out of town."

At nine o'clock sharp, DeWitt drove up before the offices of Military Government, moved down the corridor already filled with German petitioners, until he reached the door with the large prominently lettered sign, V. Loomis, Capt., QMC,<sup>22</sup> Economic Affairs—*Wirtschaft*.

Loomis had not yet arrived. DeWitt sat down in the Captain's chair behind the dark, smooth-finished desk.

The phone rang. DeWitt didn't touch it. He heard the Sergeant outside answer the extension:<sup>29</sup> "No, Colonel Willoughby, the Captain isn't here, yet. Thank you, sir. Yes, sir."

Willoughby was up and around; that was good, too. DeWitt wondered what actually went into the thinking of these people. Probably, nothing out of the ordinary. It was just that, having won the war, they were setting up a new code for themselves, with many less restrictions than they would have had at home or during the fighting. No, it couldn't be an entirely new code. Yates was right. Men form their morals and laws on the basis of previous experiences, habits, customs. The seed of the flowers that bloomed over here lay back in America.

Loomis opened the door and stopped short as he saw the visitor.

"I've taken your chair," said DeWitt. "Sorry."

"Please keep it," said Loomis. "As long as you're comfortable, sir."

DeWitt saw the puffy, pasty texture of the Captain's face. The man hadn't slept well, maybe not at all.

"I haven't had coffee," said Loomis. "The Sergeant has an electric heater, liberated," you know? Would you like some coffee?"

"No, thanks," said DeWitt.

With that, the generalities were exhausted. Loomis knew that DeWitt would now come to the point.

DeWitt did it with particular kindness. "I don't want to frighten you, Loomis," he said, "I don't want to shock you into anything. We know that there's been an ugly business. I mean that 10 per cent rakeoff that you've been getting."

"It isn't true!" Loomis broke in. *You deny everything, Willoughby had said last night to Lammlein and to him. No matter how they ask you and what they promise you, you deny everything. They haven't a shred of proof.* •

DeWitt raised his hand in mild rejection.

"But I swear to you, Colonel. . . ."

"Please, don't swear," said DeWitt.

That DeWitt didn't threaten or shout, or lay down the law, unnerved Loomis. He bit his nails.

"Sir, don't you think we should call in Colonel Wiloughby? He'll be glad to confirm. . . ."

"Not yet, Loomis, not yet. I wish to talk first to you because, somehow, I feel that you have extenuating reasons. Will you permit me a few personal questions?"

Loomis nodded.

"What were you in civilian life, Loomis? You had a small radio store, right? You have a wife, right? You made a living?"

"Just about."

"And now your store is closed down?"

"The wife is keeping it open."

"And then you came overseas. You've had men under you, many men. Did you ever have any employees?"

"For a time I had one."

"But over here, as early as Normandy, you had power over more than a hundred people?"

"Yes."

"How did it feel?"

"Good."

"You had a good time. You had power over men and power over supplies—food, gasoline—that were scarce and therefore high in value. Maybe you did a little business on the side. So many people were on the black market, why shouldn't you be?"

"It's not true, sir!"

"It's so long ago, Loomis. Nobody's going to hang you for it. . . And finally, Germany. Instead of a few hundred men, you've power over tens of thousands. And you know that it's not going to last forever. . . You must make what little time you have, count, So there you are. . . I cannot judge you too severely. Take me. I was your commanding officer. I, too, bear my share of responsibility for these things, and sometimes, I sleep badly. And I'll have a certain

say in what's to be done with you Will you co-operate with me?"

- "Yes," he said, in a thin voice, 'I'll co operate "

DeWitt lit a cigarette Let's not call the Sergeant You can type? All right, here's the typewriter You sit down here Paper? Yes, and a copy What do I want as heading? Well—the date And then—no don't call it confession Just *Statement* Ready?

"First Paragraph *The undersigned and Lieutenant Colonel Clarence Willoughby* "

It was hard for DeWitt to have to put Farrish through the wringer

"Come on!" challenged Farrish, his voice strident "Facts! Facts!"

DeWitt began to recount the course and the results of the investigation of Marianne Seckendorff He described the confrontation of the girl and the Professor, from Troy's notes, and then, Pamela's entrance, Marianne's breakdown, recriminations, the denunciations

"And there you have it, General The unknown Nazi at the Rintelen estate, the whole set up out at the manor house, directly and indirectly protected by Willoughby Last night, my man Yates and Captain Troy went out to arrest the fellow hiding there—but he was gone We don't know where he is But we know who's involved in the 10 per cent racket Your top MG officers and the man who let you have the buck, and who is in everything, in the administration of Kriemien, in the Chamber of Commerce, and in the Rintelen Works—your Lämmlein, your paragon of a good German "

"Hearsay!" boomed Farrish He was out of his chair and pacing around DeWitt, as if he could wall him in with his steps, and so dam up the whole story 'A clever yarn Based on the words of a hysterical, lying, jealous, criminal woman Makes me laugh! I want facts, not rumors, I'm an American I want the testimony of Americans, officers!"

"Call Willoughby," said DeWitt

"I will! I will!" triumphed Farrish. He strode to the door and tore it open, shouting, "Pick up Colonel Willoughby," he repeated. "Immediately. Yes, sir."

Farrish was blustering. "We'll get to the bottom of this in no time. I'll have you eat your words, DeWitt! Yes, sir! It isn't Willoughby, it isn't Lämmlein—" he was hammering at his chest below his ribbons—"it's me, me! I'll resign if it's true! I'm no good for this job if it's true!"

He was fairly composed by the time Willoughby was brought in.

"What's this I hear about a 10 per cent rakeoff, Willoughby?"

Willoughby, feeling relatively safe behind the fences he had mended last night with Loomis and Lämmlein, looked at the General with sad and amazed eyes. "Sir, I have never given you reason to doubt my loyalty. To me, you're the greatest man in this Army. I've felt that way since Normandy... I'd hoped to spare you this. By God, you've got so many more important tasks that I thought it better not to bother you with petty, vicious rumors. Some people, particularly a certain Lieutenant Yates—he puts out the German newspaper in Kremen—have been backstabbing me for the longest time."

Farrish frowned. He knew how it felt to be stabbed in the back.

"I've tried to be above such things," Willoughby went on. "I've offered my friendship to Yates on several occasions, explaining my viewpoints, requesting him to lay off. But the matter goes deeper. Yates has a bias against the constructive work that you, sir, and I are trying to do in this district. He's only interested in tearing down. He's a radical, a Red!"

Farrish reached for his whip and softly rapped its handle against the edge of his desk. "A Red, huh? So he doesn't like constructive work, huh?"

Willoughby stared meaningfully at DeWitt. "Unfortunately, General, he's found some support from your own

friends. I'm sure Colonel DeWitt didn't mean to become a pawn in this conspiracy."

He waited, expecting DeWitt to break in. As DeWitt said nothing and didn't even look up, Willoughby continued, with less assurance, "Well, it seems that Yates has compiled and edited various rumors, originating mainly from German women. Sir, if you wish to question me on the basis of that kind of evidence, I stand ready to answer. But I don't think it should be necessary."

Farrish was profoundly uncomfortable. Had he been alone with Willoughby, he would have said to him: All right, go back to your office, you've got work to do.

But DeWitt sat there, like a Shylock.

"There's a man at the Rintelen estate..." said Farrish.

"I know of him, sir. I've given orders for the man's arrest."

Farrish scratched his head with the tip of his whip. "But I know the man escaped!"

"We'll catch him, sir!" Willoughby said confidently.

Farrish coughed. "Well, then..." He looked at DeWitt to see whether he would have to go on.

DeWitt was waiting, still waiting.

Farrish drew breath for a renewed attempt. "The 10 per cent, Willoughby, the 10 per cent!"

Willoughby stiffened. "Not a word of that is true!"

Farrish got up, put his whip next to his fountain pen and pencils, and beamed at DeWitt, "As far as I'm concerned old man, I trust the word of an American officer more than that of some German trollop."

"You're a liar, Willoughby," said DeWitt.

Willoughby's paunchy face reddened. "I demand an apology!" he shouted. "I demand—General Farrish...!"

"Here," said DeWitt, pulling a paper out of his pocket, "I have the word of another American officer—a signed statement by Captain Loomis who, I understand was involved with you in the whole deal. Let me read it to you,

**General. Kremmen, today's date. First paragraph: *The undersigned and Lieutenant Colonel Clarence Willoughby...***"

It was a lengthy document. It gave the details of the operation, the date starting on which proceeds of the private tax leveled on all Kremmen business, large and small, were split between Loomis and Willoughby, the reasons for the split, the methods of collection, everything.

The toneless, tired voice of DeWitt stopped. Willoughby heard Farrish say, "Yes. I see. Oh, yes." Pitiful. The great man had no words, couldn't even shout or threaten.

Then Farrish did shout. It took him some moments to collect the breath for it.

"Get out! Get out of here! Get out of Kremmen! I could have you court-martialed. But I don't want to dirty my fingers with this! God damn it! I'll have you out of the ETO,<sup>31</sup> out of everything! You report to Base Section, Colonel Willoughby!"

"Yes, sir!"

The way to Le Havre leads through Paris, Willoughby thought. In Paris was Bereskin. He'd hand over the Rintelen shares to the Prince. It was a business transaction, legal and above board, and nobody could horn in on that. They imagined they had won—Yates, DeWitt, the whole faction of Crusaders. But they hadn't. They couldn't win. They would never win. He had always been one jump ahead of them, in war and in peace. Yes, sir.

"Out!" said Farrish. Willoughby saluted smartly.

At the gate to the Barracks of the Kremmen Dragoons, he bummed a ride into town on a rations truck.

"Cigarette?" He offered his pack genially to the driver.

"Yes, sir, thank you, sir," said the man.

"Pettinger," Yates said to Troy, "Erich Pettinger, Lieutenant Colonel of the SS, friend of Prince Bereskin, the man who gave orders to have your captured men massacred in the Bulge Battle, the man who planned to have the people of Ens Dorf suffocated in their mine—and there Lämmlein.

gave me the name. And he was so casual about it. . . . It was almost funny. Only I didn't feel funny. I felt my heart jump."

Yates had come directly from the arrest and interrogation of Lämmlein to Troy's room in the Kremen *Polizei-Präsidium*.

"We haven't got him yet," Yates said.

"We'll get him!" Troy rose. "I never was so certain in my whole life. It makes sense. Somewhere, sometime, this war had to add up. . . ."

Yates smiled back, a thin, weary smile. "When that colorless individual said to me: 'Pettinger!' I thought for a moment. *This is it*. But, Troy--what's one man, even if you throw Willoughby into the bargain? It's only a beginning. When I got on the boat and we went down the Hudson and across, I didn't know I'd get into something that goes on and on. . . ."

They went with a dozen men, enough to cover both entrances to the Rintelen air-raid shelter. They had along the wretched Lämmlein who, in his correct but sweated business suit, looked oddly out of place among the armed and steel-helmeted soldiers.

Yates called Lämmlein from the truck where he had been retained under the driver's guard.

"You'll go in there," he said. "Tell Pettinger that the game is up. Tell him to come out, quietly, without arms. Herr Lämmlein, we won't send in any of our own men. You don't expect us to do that, do you? You put him in there, you get him out."

Lämmlein stared vaguely. He heard Troy say evenly, "Get going! I'd hate to have to make you get going." Slowly, tortuously, Lämmlein walked toward and into the dark, yawning hole.

Yates and Troy were listening. But no sound came from the shelter. Pettinger must be hiding deep inside.

"You don't think he fooled us?" said Troy. "Perhaps there's a third exit, and the two gents have skipped and are laughing their heads off?"



"No," said Yates, "I had the layout checked."

"Perhaps Pettinger is keeping Lämmlein down there, as a hostage or something?"

"He'd make a hell of a mistake," said Yates. "He'd overestimate considerably the value Lämmlein has to us. And he must know that we'll push in there some time or other. . . ."

The crack of a shot. It seemed far off, and it was followed by a low rumbling. The soldiers tensed.

Then a face appeared at the entrance, deathly pale, a gaping, distorted mouth.

"Can't—control his—tail. . . ." Followed by angry, painful coughing. Maybe Lämmlein was laughing at something, but what it was, Yates couldn't make out. "Come out—shoot, go ahead—shoot—can't control—nothing. . . ."

"You'd better get an ambulance," said Troy.

The medic left.

"What'll we do now?" Troy seemed angry, or disappointed, or both.

Yates got up. "Two men!" he called. And, turning to Troy, he said quietly, "I'll go in. It'll be a pleasure to shoot it out."

Two men had come up to them and placed themselves close to Yates.

"Let me handle this," said Troy. He waved to the driver, and the man ambled over. "Do you still happen to have your breaching charges?"

"Breaching charges. . . ?" the driver said; then the slow light of understanding went over his face. They had issued him the stuff in Normandy, four bags with eighteen half-pound blocks of TNT<sup>33</sup> in each, to be used to blast the way for his truck through the hedgerows. He had almost forgotten about them, since TNT was all right as long as no cap was inside it; forgotten, the bags had rested in a corner under his seat all this time.

"Shall I bring them over, sir?" he asked.

"I wish you would."

The driver went to his truck and returned, a bag under each arm, the caps<sup>34</sup> and fuses<sup>35</sup> in his pocket.

"There!" said Troy, measuring off about three feet of the fuse, cutting it, and handing the end to Yates. "That'll do. What time do you have, Yates—exactly?"

Yates said it was 16.18.

"Sixteen eighteen," said Troy, adjusting his watch. "Give me fifteen minutes on the dot. Then you light the fuse."

"Good enough," said Yates, taking the fuse from Troy. Yates waited. He looked at his watch. It was time.

The seconds. . .

Then the crash and the rumbling and the dust. And the answering crash from Troy's end.

It was done.

Troy led Karen past the empty stables and garages, past the cottages of the help, each cottage a complete house with kitchen and every other facility.

"We haven't much time," Karen said with a tender regret. "Farrish is here, tassels and all. . ."

"Oh, we've got a few minutes!" Troy was both happy and grave, and his voice was husky as he told Karen, "Look at all this! And what we're going to do with it! We're going to put the people in the manor house and the cottages, and we'll convert the stables and garages into living quarters and workshops. If necessary, we'll set up some Quonset<sup>36</sup> huts on the lawns."

He spoke like a builder, a sensible American seeing a job to be done, a job that interested him. Karen pressed his hand.

"When I go back to America," he went on, "I want to settle down. I'm going to build me a house. I'm going to settle down and live and forget."

"You won't be able to forget."

"No. I guess I won't. But I'm going to build that house. I can work hard, Karen. You don't know how hard I can work if I see what it's for and that something comes of it."

She looked at the garden, the woods in the distance, the rolling land, the horizon fringed with the smokestacks of Kremmen. And she thought that the time had come when life would be bearable only alongside such a man.

"Will you live with me?" he asked calmly.

"Yes."

"You and I, together?"

"Yes."

"You're sure, Karen? This is for keeps—"

In answer, she turned to him. His kiss was harsh and light-lipped, and she felt his hard chin.

"Darling," she whispered, "this is how you do it..."

It had been decided that Professor Seckendorff would speak for the people from the Lower Depths, and that salient parts of his speech would be translated for the American military authorities present in the hall of the manor house.

"What else did we learn in concentration camp? We learned that the enemy does not necessarily come from across any front lines or any borders. What do we want, what have we always wanted? A country in which men and women can live free of fear, secure in their lives, their ideas, and the fruits of their work. In Germany, the enemy of the kind of life we want has suffered a defeat; but he has not been crushed—"

"That enemy is not limited by borders," trumpeted the old man, "Germany's or any other country's. Let us consider this House as a school that will turn out fighters against that enemy, wherever he hides..."

Suddenly, DeWitt was conscious of the impatient tapping of Farrish's boot. He took his stand next to the flag that was mounted where Maximilian von Rintelen's portrait had hung. He looked down at his audience—the Americans to one side, the bedraggled Germans crowded on the other. His hands fumbled; he missed his whip.

"I've had my eyes on this estate for the longest time," Farrish said. "I thought. This is just the place we need for you people. But remember, it is American property. Wherever we stand, there's America, the greatest country on earth, and we stand for no nonsense. What the Professor here has said is well and good, and I approve of it. I've always approved of noble sentiments. But with all of that, a person's got to know his place. . . ."

DeWitt glanced at Yates. He motioned his head slightly, toward the door. The two tiptoed out as Farrish continued "Couldn't stand it," said DeWitt.

They sat down on a stone bench close to the entrance of the manor house.

"I'm sure he saw us go out," said Yates.

DeWitt shrugged. "I'm going back to the States, anyhow I've asked to be retired. Just the right, ripe age. And the war has been won, after a fashion."

"There's still so much to do," Yates said. Out of the corner of his eye, he observed the Colonel. DeWitt looked old.

"I know there's a lot to be done," agreed DeWitt.

"You see," DeWitt went on, "when the Willoughby question came up, Farrish promised to quit if I proved that he was making a mess of it. And we proved it to him. He didn't have the guts to come through. He didn't have the guts to admit that he was wrong and not the man for building the world we fought for. I said to him, 'General, there just isn't enough room here for the both of us.' And when he stopped laughing, he said, 'All right, old man, then *you* go.' So I'm going. . . ."

Yates said, "You're sure, sir, that you're doing the right thing?"

DeWitt picked up a pebble and threw it away.

"No," he said, "the trouble is I'm not sure at all. However, it doesn't make much difference where you are, these days. Good man, your Professor! If that enemy ever won out in our country, I'd end up in a concentration camp, too."

"I'd be proud to meet you there, again," said Yates.

*Carl Offord*

## THE GREEN GREEN GRASS AND A GUN

It was after five and the Caribbean sun was wearing off cool. The large native man jogged easily down the broad asphalt road that tumbled toward the beach and the sea, hemmed in on both sides by trim lawns and trim white-painted bungalows and barracks of the American oil people<sup>1</sup> and American soldiers. The native man wore an old black suit which was spotted with oil from the American machine shop, and when he neared the American sentry box<sup>2</sup> which was painted white and looked very trim on the trim green green grass he began to search in the pockets of his grimy blue shirt for the American pass.

Inside the sentry box the American soldier looked up from a letter he was writing and through the diamond-shaped cutout in the wall he saw the native. He frowned.

He was a very young soldier, still pudgy-faced and soft-haired, and soft-handed too, for he'd gone straight into uniform from his Colorado college. He'd been writing on a sheet of white paper clipped to an Army clipboard. He was annoyed at seeing the native for it meant leaving of his letter and going outside to challenge him for his pass. And this challenging for a pass was a piece of stupidity anyhow.

thought the young soldier. In the first place any native coming through knew he should have a pass and therefore had a pass. In the second place very few natives come through the area. He cursed softly because he hated to break off the letter when he'd just about got clear in his mind what he'd write and say about the ailing sister of the Hartwells back there in Colorado. And dammit, deep down in himself he hated nonsense, and stopping men in broad daylight for passes was what he considered nonsense. If it were nighttime it would make more sense, he thought. He could at least see some point to it if it were nighttime for perhaps there was something to the recent talk of the Colonel on the changing attitude of the native people. He himself was aware of the peculiar change for it was a thing that came to life and breathed on the air the moment a soldier walked into a rum shop<sup>3</sup> or stopped at a stall<sup>4</sup> in the village marketplace. It was not a thing that ever sounded itself in words but only in a bristling silence and swift chilling of the air. But did that lend any more sense to stopping a man in high daytime for a doggone pass?

He fought with himself as to whether he should stop writing his letter and challenge the native man. The Hartwells had been neighbors and the oldest girl, two years his senior, had been sick and ailing all his life it seemed, having the most unusual hemorrhages. But all of the other Hartwells were healthy and some of them were even robust, like his girl, Jeanne. He hadn't seen Jeanne since a long time back and he never missed writing her a single day, and after some hard thought he always found a new bunch of kind, little cheerful words to say about the ailing sister. And now, just when he'd sweated out a new string of kind little words for today the native appeared, and even while he debated with himself as to what he should do the string of words went slipping out of his mind. He cursed to himself, fine and soft like wispy smoke in the barrel of a gun, and put aside the clipboard and took down his

carbine from the nail on the wall of the sentry box and went out.

The native man stopped before him and continued to search in the pockets of his work shirt for the American pass.

"Come on, dig it up," the young soldier said impatiently, and angrily, though his anger was not so much against the native as against having to tear away from writing his letter. Now he'd have to think up a fresh string of words for the ailing Hartwell girl.

"I'm looking," the native man said very quietly, his eyes seeming to turn inward in bewilderment at not finding the pass in his shirt pockets.

"Go on, go on," the young soldier said, and he jerked his head in signal to the native to pass on without bothering about the pass. But the native man did not seem to catch on.

"What?" he murmured, and he kept on digging in his pockets his hands moving from his shirt to the pockets of his black jacket, and then to the pockets of his trousers. The young soldier looked cautiously about to see if an officer was around watching, or perhaps the corporal of the guard. He knew he was sticking his neck out when he allowed a native to go by without showing his pass.

"I know I have it," the native said, searching through his pockets over and over. "I have it somewhere, I ought to have it."

"Well, goddammit, find it then!" The young soldier swore with the meaningless ease of soldier-talk, but, too, he was becoming excited. The fact that the guy stood there searching for the pass and not understanding his signal was upsetting. "Hey!" he said. "Look in your pants and pull out sump'n. Just show me some kind of paper, I don't give a damn what it is. Flash it and go on about your business, will you?" He spoke in a low tone and through a twist of his mouth.

But still the native didn't catch on. Undoubtedly, the strange American accent from the twisted mouth was in itself unintelligible. "Give me a minute," he said. "I've got it somewhere."

The young soldier stepped back and said: "Now get to hell out of here! Goddam, I try to give you a break<sup>5</sup> and you don't grab it. Now you got to go on back "

The native man smiled a little, apparently not understanding the soldier. He seemed absorbed in his search for the American pass, his large hands groping from one pocket to the next. He shook his head slowly. "I don't understand it. It should be right here." He tapped the left pocket of his work shirt. "I always keep it here."

"Maybe you didn't hear me. You got to go back," said the young soldier. He cooled a bit now but the fact was, the black man simply had to go back. There could be nothing but that now. The black man had stood there searching for the pass for too long a time; the damn fool should have been gone wherever the hell he was going a long time ago. He had told him to go through but the damn fool had stood there searching his pockets and advertising himself to the whole damn world.

"Go back?" The native man turned and glanced at the steep hill he had just descended.

"That's what I said. And I don't want any argument either. What's the idea of trying to get by without a pass anyhow?" He was becoming angry again. It was odd, the way his anger rose and fell, like a seesaw, brought on and drawn off by factors mysterious even to himself. Maybe the answer was in the way the black man looked at him. Maybe it was in his desire to get back to the letter on the clipboard. Maybe it was his plain and simple yearning to be home in Colorado and out of the Army instead of killing time in the heat down here.

But now the native seemed tensed and coldly serious. He turned again and looked up the steep hill, then he said



stiffly, "If you call the Head Office you'll find out I have the privilege to be owner of a pass."

"Maybe you've got a dozen passes," the young soldier said. "That cuts no ice with me right now. Now you got to go back, that's all there is to it. And don't hold me up. I've got sump'n to do."

"Oh, I see," the native man said, and nodded heavily, his eyes fixed on the young soldier. "You—all have some brass nerve," he said. "Some brass nerve. You're telling me I can't walk on this road? I just want to get to the beach. I'm not going into your fancy bungalows. I'm going to the open beach."

Alarm swelled quickly in the eyes of the young, pudgy-faced soldier. The native's manner was not right. The young soldier thought back and remembered clearly that he had loaded his carbine when he started out on duty. Remembering that helped somehow to bolster his confidence, though he hoped it would not come to his actually having to use the gun. "Listen, bud." His voice cracked a little. "I don't want to get rough with you but I got my orders. I can't let you through and that's all there is to it. If you had my job here you wouldn't be letting me through either. You'd be doing your job."

"I work in the machine shop," the native man said. "You could check that with the Head Office. My name is Bruce Gordon."

"Don't make any difference now." The young soldier shook his head. "Too late now. You've got to get back, that's all."

"It's not fair," the native man said. "I'll have to go all the way around the woods to get to the beach. That's not fair. Right now I'm almost there."

"I know, I know. . . . But you got to have a pass or no dice. You know that. Ain't my rules. I'm doing a job. I'm a soldier. You'd be doing the same if you had my job here."

"Don't say here," the native man said. "Say if I had your job in America. Think of that. Would you like me to stand on your American street with a gun? And tell you to get to hell back? Answer me that."

The young soldier stared at the black man and said nothing. He wanted to burst out, but nothing came. What could he say? Remind the native that he was a hell of a lot better off now than he ever was? That under the Americans they had more jobs than ever before?

"My brother's on the beach," the native man said, his voice a squeezed whisper. "I have to meet him and it's getting late."

"Talk can't help you now. Doesn't mean a damn right now. You got to get to hell back up there like I said. Go on. I'm busy." The young soldier tightened his grip on the carbine and stepped forward.

The native man didn't move. He stared at the young soldier and at the carbine in the softening sunlight. "Look now," he said. "You don't have to push me around, you know. I've been working hard all day and I'm in no mood to be pushed around."

"What do you mean?" The voice rose high and strident and the hands gripping the carbine became rigid. "I said to get to hell out of here." He was becoming more and more frightened and nervous. He was not actually afraid of some thing happening to him but afraid of what he might have to do.

The native man persisted. "Before you curse at me, let me ask you one thing. This is my own land. I don't belong anywhere else. I belong here. But what are you all doing here? Don't you know the war is over?"

"Goddam!" the young soldier said, and brought the carbine up, his hands and face stiff and very white. "Get out by the time I count three," he warned, his voice trembling, his hands beginning to shake. "We'll be around here as long as we goddam please! Get that? Now, get to hell out of here! One! Two!..."

The native man backed, his frightened eyes moving from the muzzle of the gun to the tight-drawn face. From farther down the hill the corporal of the guard called.

"What's going on up there?"

"Nothing," the young soldier yelled back. "Just a smart bastard."

The native man kept backing. He stumbled and almost fell, then he turned his back on the young soldier with the carbine and hurried up the steep asphalt road.

# III



*Albert Maltz*

## MAN ON A ROAD

At about four in the afternoon I crossed the bridge at Gauley, West Virginia, and turned the sharp curve leading into the tunnel under the railroad bridge. I had been over this road once before and knew what to expect—by the time I entered the tunnel I had my car down to about ten miles an hour. But even at that speed I came closer to running a man down than I ever have before. This is how it happened.

The patched, macadam road had been soaked through by an all-day rain and now it was as slick as ice. In addition, it was quite dark—a black sky and a steady, swishing rain made driving impossible without headlights. As I entered the tunnel a big cream colored truck swung fast around the curve on the other side. The curve was so sharp that his headlights had given me no warning. The tunnel was short and narrow, just about passing space for two cars, and before I knew it he was in front of me with his big, front wheels over on my side of the road.

I jammed on my brakes. Even at ten miles an hour my car skidded, first toward the truck and then, as I wrenched on the wheel, in toward the wall. There it stalled. The truck swung around hard, scraped my fender, and passed through the tunnel about an inch away from me. I could see the tense face of the young driver with the tight bulge of tobacco in

his cheek and his eyes glued on the road. I remember saying to myself that I hoped he'd swallow that tobacco and go choke himself.

I started my car and shifted into first.<sup>2</sup> It was then I saw for the first time that a man was standing in front of my car about a foot away from the inside wheel. It was a shock to see him there. "For Chrissakes," I said.

My first thought was that he had walked into the tunnel after my car had stalled. I was certain he hadn't been in there before. Then I noticed that he was standing profile to me with his hand held up in the hitch-hiker's gesture.<sup>3</sup> If he had walked into that tunnel, he'd be facing me—he wouldn't be standing sideways looking at the opposite wall. Obviously I had just missed knocking him down and obviously he didn't know it. He didn't even know I was there.

It made me run weak inside. I had a picture of a man lying crushed under a wheel with me standing over him knowing it was my car.

I called out to him "Hey!" He didn't answer me. I called louder. He didn't even turn his head. He stood there, fixed, his hand up in the air, his thumb jutting out. It scared me. It was like a story by Bierce<sup>4</sup> where the ghost of a man pops out of the air to take up his lonely post on a dark country road.

My horn is a good, loud, raucous one and I knew that the tunnel would re-double the sound. I slapped my hand down on that little black button and pressed as hard as I could. The man was either going to jump or else prove that he was a ghost.

Well, he wasn't a ghost—but he didn't jump either. And it wasn't because he was deaf. He heard that horn all right.

He was like a man in a deep sleep. The horn seemed to awaken him only by degrees, as though his whole consciousness had been sunk in some deep recess within himself. He turned his head slowly and looked at me. He was a big man, about thirty-five with a heavy-featured face—an ordinary face with a big, fleshy nose and a large mouth. The face

didn't say much. I wouldn't have called it kind or brutal or intelligent or stupid. It was just the face of a big man, wet with rain, looking at me with eyes that seemed to have a glaze over them. Except for the eyes you see faces like that going into the pit at six in the morning, or coming out of a steel mill or foundry where heavy work is done. I couldn't understand that glazed quality in his eyes. It wasn't the glassy stare of a drunken man, or the wild, mad glare I saw once in the eyes of a woman in a fit of violence. I could only think of a man I once knew who had died of cancer. Over his eyes, in the last days, there was the same dull glaze, a far away, absent look as though behind the blank, outward film there was a secret flow of past events on which his mind was focussed. It was this same look that I saw in the man on the road.

When at last he heard my horn, the man stepped very deliberately around the front of my car and came toward the inside door. The least I expected was that he would show surprise at an auto so dangerously close to him. But there was no emotion to him whatsoever. He walked slowly, deliberately, as though he had been expecting me and then bent his head down to see under the top of my car. "Kin yuh give me a lift, friend?"<sup>5</sup> he asked me.

I saw his big, horse teeth clipped at the ends and stained brown by tobacco. His voice was high-pitched and nasal with the slurred, lilting drawl<sup>6</sup> of the deep South. In West Virginia few of the town folk seem to speak that way. I judged he had been raised in the mountains.

I looked at his clothes—an old cap, a new blue work shirt, and dark trousers, all soaked through with rain. They didn't tell me much

I must have been occupied with my thoughts about him for some time, because he asked me again. "Abm goin' to Weston," he said. "Are you a'goin' thataway?"

As he said this, I looked into his eyes. The glaze had disappeared and now they were just ordinary eyes, brown and moist.



I didn't know what to reply. I didn't really want to take him in—the episode had unnerved me and I wanted to get away from the tunnel and from him too. But I saw him looking at me with a patient, almost humble glance. The rain was streaked on his face and he stood there asking for a ride and waiting in simple concentration for my answer. I was ashamed to tell him “no.” Besides, I was curious. “Climb in,” I said.

He sat down beside me, placing a brown paper package on his lap. We started out of the tunnel.

From Gauley to Weston is about a hundred miles of as difficult mountain driving as I know—a five mile climb to the top of a hill, then five miles down, and then up another. The road twists like a snake on the run and for a good deal of it there is a jagged cliff on one side and a drop of a thousand feet or more on the other. The rain, and the small rocks crumbling from the mountain side and littering up the road, made it very slow going. But in the four hours or so that it took for the trip I don't think my companion spoke to me half a dozen times.

I tried often to get him to talk. It was not that he wouldn't talk, it was rather that he didn't seem to hear me—as though as soon as he had spoken, he would slip down into that deep, secret recess within himself. He sat like a man dulled by morphine. My conversation, the rattle of the old car, the steady pour of rain were all a distant buzz—the meaningless, outside world that could not quite pierce the shell in which he seemed to be living.

As soon as we had started, I asked him how long he had been in the tunnel.

“Ah don' know,” he replied. “A good tahm, ah reckon.”

“What were you standing there for—to keep out of the rain?”

He didn't answer. I asked him again, speaking very loudly. He turned his head to me. “Excuse me, friend,” he said, “did you say somethin?”

"Yes," I answered. "Do you know I almost ran you over back in that tunnel?"

"No-o," he said. He spoke the word in that breathy way that is typical of mountain speech.

"Didn't you hear me yell to you?"

"No-o." He paused. "Ah reckon ah was thinkin'."

"Ah reckon you were," I thought to myself. "What's the matter, are you hard of hearing?" I asked him.

"No-o," he said, and turned his head away looking out front at the road.

I kept right after him. I didn't want him to go off again. I wanted somehow to get him to talk.

"Looking for work?"

"Yessuh."

He seemed to speak with an effort. It was not a difficulty of speech, it was something behind, in his mind, in his will to speak. It was as though he couldn't keep touch between his world and mine. Yet when he did answer me, he spoke directly and coherently. I didn't know what to make of it. When he first came into the car I had been a little frightened. Now I only felt terribly curious and a little sorry.

"Do you have a trade?" I was glad to come to that question. You know a good deal about a man when you know what line of work he follows and it always leads to further conversation.

"Ah ginerally follows the mines," he said.

"Now," I thought, "we're getting somewhere."

But just then we hit a stretch of unpaved road where the mud was thick and the ruts were hard to follow. I had to stop talking and watch what I was doing. And when we came to paved road again, I had lost him.

I tried again to make him talk. It was no use. He didn't even hear me. Then, finally, his silence shamed me. He was a man lost somewhere within his own soul, only asking to be left alone. I felt wrong to keep thrusting at his privacy.<sup>7</sup>

So for about four hours we drove in silence. For me those hours were almost unendurable. I have never seen such ri-

gidity in a human being. He sat straight up in the car, his outward eye fixed on the road in front, his inward eye seeing nothing. He didn't know I was in the car, he didn't know he was in the car at all, he didn't feel the rain that kept slashing in on him through the rent in the side curtains. He sat like a slab of molded rock and only from his breathing could I be sure that he was alive. His breathing was heavy.

Only once in that long trip did he change his posture. That was when he was seized with a fit of coughing. It was a fierce, hacking cough that shook his big body from side to side and doubled him over like a child with the whooping cough. He was trying to cough something up—I could hear the phlegm in his chest— but he couldn't succeed. Inside him there was an ugly scraping sound as though cold metal were being rubbed on the bone of his ribs, and he kept spitting and shaking his head.

It took almost three minutes for the fit to subside. Then he turned around to me and said, "Excuse me, friend." That was all. He was quiet again.

I felt awful. There were times when I wanted to stop the car and tell him to get out. I made up a dozen good excuses for cutting the trip short. But I couldn't do it. I was consumed by a curiosity to know what was wrong with the man. I hoped that before we parted, perhaps even as he got out of the car, he would tell me what it was or say something that would give me a clue.

I thought of the cough and wondered if it were T.B.<sup>8</sup> I thought of cases of sleeping sickness I had seen and of a boxer who was punch drunk<sup>9</sup>. But none of these things seemed to fit. Nothing physical seemed to explain this dark, terrible silence, this intense, all-exclusive absorption within himself.

Hour after hour of rain and darkness!

Once we passed the slate dump<sup>10</sup> of a mine. The rain had made the surface burst into flame and the blue and red patches flickering in a kind of witch glow on a hill of black

seemed to attract my companion. He turned his head to look at it, but he didn't speak, and I said nothing.

And again the silence and rain! Occasionally a mine tiple<sup>1</sup> with the cold, drear, smoke smell of the dump and the oil lamps in the broken down shacks where the miners live. Then the black road again and the shapeless bulk of the mountains.

We reached Weston at about eight o'clock. I was tired and chilled and hungry. I stopped in front of a café and turned to the man.

"Ah reckon this is lit," he said.

"Yes," I answered. I was surprised. I had not expected him to know that we had arrived. Then I tried a final plunge. "Will you have a cup of coffee with me?"

"Yes," he replied, "thank you, friend."

The "thank you" told me a lot. I knew from the way he said it that he wanted the coffee but couldn't pay for it; that he had taken my offer to be one of hospitality and was grateful. I was happy I had asked him.

We went inside. For the first time since I had come upon him in the tunnel he seemed human. He didn't talk, but he didn't slip inside himself either. He just sat down at the counter and waited for his coffee. When it came, he drank it slowly, holding the cup in both hands as though to warm them.

When he had finished, I asked him if he wouldn't like a sandwich. He turned around to me and smiled. It was a very gentle, a very patient smile. His big, lumpy face seemed to light up with it and become understanding and sweet and gentle.

The smile shook me all through. It didn't warm me—it made me feel sick inside. It was like watching a corpse begin to stir. I wanted to cry out, "My God, you poor man!"

Then he spoke to me. His face retained that smile and I could see the big, horse teeth stained by tobacco.

"You've bin right nice to me, friend, an' ah do appreciate it."

"That's all right," I mumbled.

He kept looking at me. I knew he was going to say something else and I was afraid of it.

"Would yuh do me a faveh?"

"Yes," I said.

He spoke softly. "Ah've got a letter here that ah done writ to mah woman, but ah can't write very good. Would you all be kind enough to write it ovah for me so it'd be proper like?"

"Yes," I said, "I'd be glad to."

"Ah kin tell you all know how to write real well," he said, and smiled.

"Yes."

He opened his blue shirt. Under his thick woolen underwear there was a paper fastened by a safety pin. He handed it to me. It was moist and warm and the damp odor of wet cloth and the slightly sour odor of his flesh clung to it.

I asked the counterpane for a sheet of paper. He brought me one. This is the letter I copied. I put it down here in his own script.

<sup>12</sup>MY DERE WIFE---

i am awritin this yere leta to tell you somethin i did not tell you afore i lef frum home. There is a cause to wy i am not able to get me any job at the mines. i told you hit was frum work abein slack. But this haint so.

Hit comes frum the time the mine was shut down an i worked in the tunel nere Gauley Bridge where the company is turnin the river inside the mounten. The mine supers say they wont hire any men war worked in thet tunel.

Hit all comes frum that rock thet we all had to drill. Thet rock was silica and hit was most all of hit glass. The powder frum thet glass has got into the lungs of all the men war worked in thet tunel thru their breathin. And this has given to all of us a sickness. The doctors writ it down for me. Hit

is silicosis. Hit makes the lungs to git all scab like and then it stops the breathin.

• Bein as our hom is a good peece frum town you aint heerd about Tom Prescott and Hansy McCulloh having died two days back. But wen i heerd this i went to see the doctor.

The doctor says i hev got me thet sickness like Tom Prescott and thet is the reeson wy i am coughin sometime. My lungs is agittin scab like.<sup>13</sup> There is in all ova a hondred men war have this death sickness frum the tunel. It is a turible plague becus the doctor says this wud not be so if the company had gave us masks to ware an put a right fan sistem in the tunel.

So i am agoin away becus the doctor says i will be dead in about fore months.

i figger on gettin some work maybe in other parts. i will send you all my money till i caint work no mohr

i did not want i should be a burdin upon you all at hum. So thet is wy i hev gone away.

I think wen you doan here frum me no mohr you orter go to your grandmaws up in the mountens at Kilney Run. You kin live there and she will take keer of you and the young one.

i hope you will be well an keep the young one out of the mines. Doan let him work there.

Doan think hard on me for agoin away and doan feel bad. But wen the young one is agrowed up you tell him wat the company has done to me.

i reckon after a bit you shud try to git you anotha man. You are a young woman yit.

Your loving husband,

JACK PITCKETT.

When I handed him the copy of his letter, he read it over. It took him a long time. Finally he folded it up and pinned it to his undershirt. His big, lumpy face was sweet and gentle. "Thank you, friend," he said. Then, very softly, with his head hanging a little—"Ahm feelin' bad about this

a-happenin' t'me. Mah wife was a good woman." He paused. And then, as though talking to himself, so low I could hardly hear it, "Ah'm feelin' right bad."

As he said this, I looked into his face. Slowly the life was going out of his eyes. It seemed to recede and go deep into the sockets like the flame of a candle going into the night. Over the eyeballs came that dull glaze. I had lost him. He sat deep within himself in his sorrowful, dark absorption.

That was all. We sat together. In me there was only mute emotion--pity and love for him, and a cold, deep hatred for what had killed him.

Presently he arose. He did not speak. Nor did I. I saw his thick, broad back in the blue work shirt as he stood by the door. Then he moved out into the darkness and rain.

*Albert Maltz*

## THE HAPPIEST MAN ON EARTH

Jesse felt ready to weep. He had been sitting in the shanty<sup>1</sup> waiting for Tom to appear, grateful for the chance to rest his injured foot, quietly, joyously anticipating the moment when Tom would say, "Why of course, Jesse, you can start whenever you're ready!"

For two weeks he had been pushing himself, from Kansas City, Missouri, to Tulsa, Oklahoma, through nights of rain and a week of scorching sun, without sleep or a decent meal, sustained by the vision of that one moment. And then Tom had come into the office. He had come in quickly, holding a sheaf of papers in his hand; he had glanced at Jesse only casually, it was true—but long enough. He had not known him. He had turned away. . . . And Tom Brackett was his brother-in-law.

Was it his clothes? Jesse knew he looked terrible. He had tried to spruce up at a drinking fountain in the park, but even that had gone badly; in his excitement he had cut himself shaving, an ugly gash down the side of his cheek. And nothing could get the red gumbo<sup>2</sup> dust out of his suit even though he had slapped himself till both arms were worn out. . . . Or was it just that he *had* changed so much?

True, they hadn't seen each other for five years; but Tom



looked five years older, that was all. He was still Tom. God! Was *he* so different?

Brackett finished his telephone call. He leaned back in his swivel chair and glanced over at Jesse with small, clear blue eyes that were suspicious and unfriendly. He was a heavy, paunchy man of forty-five, auburn-haired, rather dour looking; his face was meaty, his features pronounced and forceful, his nose somewhat bulbous and reddish-hued at the tip. He looked like a solid, decent, capable business man which he was. He surveyed Jesse with cold indifference, manifestly unwilling to spend time on him. Even the way he chewed his toothpick seemed contemptuous to Jesse.

"Yes?" Brackett said suddenly. "What do you want?"

His voice was decent enough, Jesse admitted. He had expected it to be worse. He moved up to the wooden counter that partitioned the shanty. He thrust a hand nervously through his tangled hair.

"I guess you don't recognize me, Tom," he said falteringly, "I'm Jesse Fulton."

"Hugh?" Brackett said. That was all.

"Yes, I am, and Ella sends you her love."

Brackett rose and walked over to the counter until they were face to face. He surveyed Fulton incredulously, trying to measure the resemblance to his brother-in-law as he remembered him. This man was tall, about thirty. That fitted! He had straight good features and a lank erect body. That was right too. But the face was too gaunt, the body too spiny under the baggy clothes for him to be sure. His brother-in-law had been a solid, strong young man with muscle and beef to him. It was like looking at a faded, badly taken photograph and trying to recognize the subject: the resemblance was there but the difference was tremendous. He searched the eyes. They at least seemed definitely familiar, gray with a curiously shy but decent look in them. He had liked that about Fulton.

Jesse stood quiet. Inside he was seething. Brackett was like a man examining a piece of broken-down horse flesh;

there was a look of pure pity in his eyes. It made Jesse furious. He knew he wasn't as far gone as all that.

"Yes, I believe you are," Brackett said finally, "but you sure have changed."

"By God, it's five years, ain't it?" Jesse said resentfully. "You only saw me a couple of times anyway." Then, to himself, with his lips locked together, in mingled vehemence and shame, What if I have changed? Don't everybody? I ain't no corpse.

"You were solid looking," Brackett continued softly, in the same tone of incredulous wonder. "You lost weight, I guess?"

Jesse kept silent. He needed Brackett too much to risk antagonizing him. But it was only by deliberate effort that he could keep from boiling over. The pause lengthened, became painful. Brackett flushed. "Jaminy Christmas, excuse me," he burst out in apology. He jerked the counter up. "Come in. Take a seat. Good God, boy"—he grasped Jesse's hand and shook it—"I *am* glad to see you; don't think anything else! You just looked so peaked."

"It's all right," Jesse murmured. He sat down, thrusting his hand through his curly, tangled hair.

"Why are you limping?"

"I stepped on a stone; it jagged a hole through my shoe." Jesse pulled his feet back under the chair. He was ashamed of his shoes. They had come from the Relief originally, and two weeks on the road had about finished them. All morning, with a kind of delicious, foolish solemnity, he had been vowing to himself that before anything else, before even a suit of clothes, he was going to buy himself a brand new strong pair of shoes.

Brackett kept his eyes off Jesse's feet. He knew what was bothering the boy and it filled his heart with pity. The whole thing was appalling. He had never seen anyone who looked more down and out. His sister had been writing to him every week, but she hadn't told him they were as badly off as this.

"Well now, listen," Brackett began, "tell me things, How's Ella?"

"Oh, she's pretty good," Jesse replied absently. He had a soft, pleasing, rather shy voice that went with his soft gray eyes. He was worrying over how to get started.

"And the kids?"

"Oh, they're fine. . . . Well, you know," Jesse added, becoming more attentive, "the young one has to wear a brace. He can't run around, you know. But he's smart. He draws pictures and he does things, you know."

"Yes," Brackett said. "That's good." He hesitated. There was a moment's silence. Jesse fidgeted in his chair. Now that the time had arrived, he felt awkward. Brackett leaned forward and put his hand on Jesse's knee. "Ella didn't tell me things were so bad for you, Jesse. I might have helped."

"Well, goodness," Jesse returned softly, "you been having your own troubles, ain't you?"

"Yes," Brackett leaned back. His ruddy face became mournful and darkly bitter. "You know I lost my hardware shop?"

"Well sure, of course," Jesse answered, surprised. "You wrote us. That's what I mean."

"I forgot," Brackett said. "I keep on being surprised over it myself. Not that it was worth much," he added bitterly. "It was running down hill for three years. I guess I just wanted it because it was mine." He laughed pointlessly, without mirth. "Well tell me about yourself," he asked. "What happened to the job you had?"

Jesse burst out abruptly, with agitation, "Let it wait, Tom, I got something on my mind."

"It ain't you and Ella?" Brackett interrupted anxiously.

"Why no!" Jesse sat back. "Why however did you come to think that? Why Ella and me—" he stopped, laughing. "Why, Tom, I'm just crazy about Ella; Why she's just wonderful. She's just my whole life, Tom."

"Excuse me. Forget it." Brackett chuckled uncomfortably, turned away. The naked intensity of the youth's burst

of love had upset him. It made him wish savagely that he could do something for them. They were both too decent to have had it so hard. Ella was like this boy too, shy and a little soft.

"Tom, listen," Jesse said, "I come here on purpose." He thrust his hand through his hair. "I want you to help me."

"Damn it, boy," Brackett groaned. He had been expecting this. "I can't much. I only get thirty five a week and I'm damn grateful for it."

"Sure, I know," Jesse emphasized excitedly. He was feeling once again the wild, delicious agitation that had possessed him in the early hours of the morning. "I know you can't help us with money! But we met a man who works for you! He was in our city! He said you could give me a job!"

"Who said?"

"Oh, why didn't you tell me?" Jesse burst out reproachfully. "Why as soon as I heard it I started out. For two weeks now I been pushing ahead like crazy."

Brackett groaned aloud. "You come walking from Kansas City in two weeks so I could give you a job?"

"Sure, Tom, of course. What else could I do?"

"God Almighty, there ain't no jobs, Jesse! It's a slack season. And you don't know this oil business. It's special. I got my friends here but they couldn't do nothing now. Don't you think I'd ask for you as soon as there was a chance?"

Jesse felt stunned. The hope of the last two weeks seemed rolling up into a ball of agony in his stomach. Then frantically, he cried. "But listen, this man said *you* could hire! He *told* me! He drives trucks for you! He said you *always* need men!"

"Oh! . . . You mean *my* department?" Brackett said in a low voice.

"Yes, Tom. That's it!"

"Oh, no, you don't want to work in my department," Brackett told him in the same low voice. "You don't know what it is."

"Yes, I do," Jesse insisted. "He told me all about it, Tom. You're a dispatcher, ain't you? You sent the dynamite trucks out?"

"Who was the man, Jesse?"

"Everett, Everett, I think."

"Egbert? Man about my size?" Brackett asked slowly.

"Yes, Egbert. He wasn't a phony,<sup>3</sup> was he?"

Brackett laughed. For the second time his laughter was curiously without mirth. "No, he wasn't a phony." Then, in a changed voice: "Jimmy, boy, you should have asked me before you trekked all the way down here."

"Oh, I didn't want to," Jesse explained with naive cunning. "I knew you'd say 'no.' He told me it was risky work, Tom. But I don't care."

Brackett locked his fingers together. His solid, meaty face became very hard. "I'm going to say 'no' anyway, Jesse."

Jesse cried out. It had not occurred to him that Brackett would not agree. It had seemed as though reaching Tulsa were the only problem he had to face. "Oh, no," he begged "you can't. Ain't there any jobs, Tom?"

"Sure, there's jobs. There's even Egbert's job if you want it."

"He's quit?"

"He's dead!"

"Oh!"

"On the job, Jesse. Last night if you want to know."

"Oh!" ... Then, "I don't care!"

"Now you listen to me," Brackett said. "I'll tell you a few things that you should have asked before you started out. It ain't dynamite you drive. They don't use anything as safe as dynamite in drilling oil wells. They wish they could, but they can't. It's nitroglycerin! Soup!"

"But I know," Jesse told him reassuringly. "He advised me, Tom. You don't have to think I don't know."

"Shut up a minute," Brackett ordered angrily. "Listen! You just have to look at this soup, see? You just cough loud

and it blows! You know how they transport it? In a can that's shaped like this, see, like a fan? That's to give room for compartments, because each compartment has to be lined with rubber. That's the only way you can even *think* of handling it."

"Listen, Tom—"

"Now wait a minute, Jesse. For God's sake just put your mind to this. I know you had your heart set on a job, but you've got to understand. This stuff goes only in special trucks! At night! They got to follow a special route! They can't go through any city! If they lay over,<sup>4</sup> it's got to be in a special garage! Don't you see what that means? Don't that tell you how dangerous it is?"

"I'll drive careful," Jesse said. "I know how to handle a truck. I'll drive slow."

Brackett groaned. "Do you think Egbert didn't drive careful or know how to handle a truck?"

"Tom," Jesse said earnestly, "you can't scare me. I got my mind fixed on only one thing; Egbert said he was getting a dollar a mile. He was making five to six hundred dollars a month for half a month's work, he said. Can I get the same?"

"Sure you can get the same," Brackett told him savagely. "A dollar a mile. It's easy. But why do you think the company has to pay so much? It's easy—until you run over a stone that your headlights don't pick out, like Egbert did. Or get a blowout!<sup>5</sup> Or get something in your eye, so the wheel twists and you jar the truck! Or any other God damn thing that nobody ever knows! We can't ask Egbert what happened to him. There's no truck to give any evidence. There's no corpse. There's nothing! Maybe tomorrow somebody'll find a piece of twisted steel way off in a cornfield. But we never find the driver. Not even a finger nail. All we know is that he don't come in on schedule. Then we wait for the police to call us. You know what happened last night? Something went wrong on the bridge. Maybe Egbert was nervous. Maybe he brushed the side with his fender.

Only there's no bridge any more. No truck. No Egbert. Do you understand now? That's what you get for your God damn dollar a mile!"

There was a moment of silence. Jesse sat twisting his long thin hands. His mouth was sagging open, his face was agonized. Then he shut his eyes and spoke softly. "I don't care about that, Tom. You told me. Now you got to be good to me and give me the job."

Brackett slapped the palm of his hand down on his desk. "No!"

"Listen, Tom," Jesse said softly, "you just don't understand." He opened his eyes. They were filled with tears. They made Brackett turn away. "Just look at me, Tom. Don't that tell you enough? What did you think of me when you first saw me? You thought: 'Why don't that bum go away and stop panhandling?' Didn't you, Tom? Tom, I just can't live like this any more. I got to be able to walk down the street with my head up."

"You're crazy," Brackett muttered. "Every year there's one out of five drivers gets killed. That's the average. What's worth that?"

"Is my life worth anything now? We're just starving at home, Tom. They ain't put us back on relief yet."

"Then you should have told me," Brackett exclaimed harshly. "It's your own damn fault. A man has no right to have false pride when his family ain't eating. I'll borrow some money and we'll telegraph it to Ella. Then you go home and get back on relief."

"And then what?"

"And then wait. God damn it! You're no old man. You got no right to throw your life away. Sometime you'll get a job"

"No!" Jesse jumped up. "No. I believed that too. But I don't now," he cried passionately. "I ain't getting a job no more than you're getting your hardware store back. I lost my skill, Tom. Linotyping is skilled work. I'm rusty now. I've been six years on relief. The only work I've had

is pick and shovel. When I got that job this spring I was supposed to be an A-1 man.<sup>7</sup> But I wasn't. And they got new machines now. As soon as the slack started they let me out."

"So what?" Brackett said harshly. "Ain't there other jobs?"

"How do I know?" Jesse replied. "There ain't been one for six years. I'd even be afraid to take one now. It's been too hard waiting so many weeks to get back on relief."

"Well, you got to have some courage," Brackett shouted. "You've got to keep up hope."

"I got all the courage you want," Jesse retorted vehemently, "but no. I ain't got no hope. The hope has dried up in me in six years' waiting. You're the only hope I got."

"You're crazy," Brackett muttered. "I won't do it. For God's sake think of Ella for a minute."

"Don't you *know* I'm thinking about her?" Jesse asked softly. He plucked at Brackett's sleeve. "That's what decided me, Tom." His voice became muted into a hushed, pained whisper. "The night Egbert was at our house I looked at Ella like I'd seen her for the first time. *She ain't pretty any more, Tom!*" Brackett jerked his head and moved away. Jesse followed him, taking a deep, sobbing breath. "Don't that tell you, Tom? Ella was like a little doll or something, you remember. I couldn't walk down the street without somebody turning to look at her. She ain't twenty-nine yet, Tom, and she ain't pretty no more."

Brackett sat down with his shoulders hunched up wearily. He gripped his hands together and sat leaning forward, staring at the floor.

Jesse stood over him, his gaunt face flushed with emotion, almost unpleasant in its look of pleading and bitter humility. "I ain't done right for Ella, Tom. Ella deserved better. This is the only chance I see in my whole life to do something for her. I've just been a failure."

"Don't talk nonsense," Brackett commented, without rancor. "You ain't a failure. No more than me. There's mil-



lions of men in the identical situation. It's just the depression, or the recession, or the God damn New Deal,<sup>8</sup> or . . . ." He swore and lapsed into silence.

"Oh, no," Jesse corrected him, in a knowing, sorrowful tone, "those things maybe excuse other men. But not me. It was up to me to do better. This is my own fault!"

"Oh, beans!" Brackett said. "It's more sun spots than it's you!"

Jesse's face turned an unhealthy mottled red. It looked swollen. "Well, I don't care," he cried wildly. "I don't care! You got to give me this! I got to lift my head up. I went through one stretch of hell but I can't go through another. You want me to keep looking at my little boy's legs and tell myself if I had a job he wouldn't be like that? Every time he walks he says to me, 'I got soft bones from the rickets and you give it to me because you didn't feed me right! Jesus Christ, Tom, you think I'm going to sit there and watch him like that another six years?'"

Brackett leaped to his feet. "So what if you do?" he shouted. "You say you're thinking about Ella. How's she going to like it when you get killed?"

"Maybe I won't," Jesse pleaded. "I've got to have some luck sometime."

"That's what they all think," Brackett replied scornfully. "When you take this job your luck is a question mark. The only thing certain is that sooner or later you get killed."

"Okay then," Jesse shouted back. "Then I do! But meanwhile I got something, don't I? I can buy a pair of shoes. Look at me! I can buy a suit that don't say 'Relief' by the way it fits. I can smoke cigarettes. I can buy some candy for the kids. I can eat some myself. Yes, by God, I want to eat some candy. I want a glass of beer once a day. I want Ella dressed up. I want her to eat meat three times a week, four times maybe. I want to take my family to the movies."

Brackett sat down. "Oh, shut up," he said wearily.

"No," Jesse told him softly, passionately, "you can't get rid of me. Listen, Tom," he pleaded, "I got it all figured out.

On six hundred a month look how much I can save! If I last only three months, look how much it is—a thousand dollars—more! And maybe I'll last longer. Maybe a couple years. I can fix Ella up for life!"

"You said it," Brackett interposed. "I suppose you think she'll enjoy living when you're on a job like that?"

"I got it all figured out," Jesse answered excitedly. "She don't know, see? I tell her I make only forty. You put the rest in a bank account for her, Tom."

"Oh, shut up," Brackett said. "You think you'll be happy? Every minute, waking and sleeping, you'll be wondering if to-morrow you'll be dead. And the worst days will be your days off, when you're not driving. They have to give you every other day free to get your nerve back. And you lay around the house eating your heart out. That's how happy you'll be."

Jesse laughed. "I'll be happy! Don't you worry, I'll be so happy, I'll be singing. Lord God, Tom, I'm going to feel *proud* of myself for the first time in seven years!"

"Oh, shut up, shut up," Brackett said.

The little shanty became silent. After a moment Jesse whispered: "You got to, Tom. You got to. You got to."

Again there was silence. Brackett raised both hands to his head, pressed the palms against his temples.

"Tom, Tom—" Jesse said.

Brackett sighed. "Oh God damn it," he said finally. "All right, I'll take you on, God help me." His voice was low, hoarse, infinitely weary. "If you're ready to drive to-night, you can drive to-night."

Jesse didn't answer. He couldn't. Brackett looked up. The tears were running down Jesse's face. He was swallowing and trying to speak, but only making an absurd, gasping noise.

"I'll send a wire to Ella," Brackett said in the same hoarse, weary voice. "I'll tell her you got a job, and you'll send her fare in a couple of days. You'll have some money then—that is, if you last the week out, you jackass!"

Jesse only nodded. His heart felt so close to bursting that he pressed both hands against it, as though to hold it locked within his breast.

"Come back here at six o'clock," Brackett said. "Here's some money. Eat a good meal."

"Thanks," Jesse whispered.

"Wait a minute," Brackett said. "Here's my address." He wrote it on a piece of paper. "Take any car going that way. Ask the conductor where to get off. Take a bath and get some sleep."

"Thanks," Jesse said. "Thanks, Tom."

"Oh, get out of here," Brackett said.

"Tom."

"What?"

"I just--" Jesse stopped. Brackett saw his face. The eyes were still glistening with tears, but the gaunt face was shining now, with a kind of fierce radiance.

Brackett turned away. "I'm busy," he said.

Jesse went out. The wet film blinded him but the whole world seemed to have turned golden. He limped slowly with the blood pounding his temples and a wild, incommunicable joy in his heart. "I'm the happiest man in the world," he whispered to himself. "I'm the happiest man on the whole earth."

Brackett sat watching till finally Jesse turned the corner of the alley and disappeared. Then he hunched himself over, with his head in his hands. His heart was beating painfully, like something old and clogged. He listened to it as it beat. He sat in desperate tranquillity, gripping his head in his hands.

*William J. Griffin*

## YOU ARE IN AMERICA, TIMMY

Timothy Wheilan sat in the sun. With his denim<sup>1</sup> — covered back against the corrugated side of the pier and his heavy safety shoes<sup>2</sup> stretched out toward the splintered stringpiece<sup>3</sup> he sat staring at the river and watching, from beneath the broken peak of his cap, the gulls floating unruffled amid the traffic and unmentionable excrescences of the Hudson.

In the morning he and the other men of his gang had worked on the bottom deck<sup>4</sup> of the freighter,<sup>5</sup> still in her gray warpaint, moored further out against the dock. They would wait in the cool gloom of the deep hold watching the square of blue sky above until the cargo net swung over and down.

Steadily and relentlessly the crates<sup>6</sup> contained in the sling would be shifted to their appointed tiers<sup>7</sup> and corners, the baling hooks thudding into the wooden boxes, the arms and shoulders and backs of the men moving in deeply learned ease. Then the net would be lifted out at the end of its slim cable and the gang would resume their attitude of supplication, arms folded, watching the sky, joking and talking out of the corners of their mouths.

They watched warily, for thirty thousand pounds of cargo swung on a war-weary cable by even wearier machinery

is a capricious enemy; a powerful, body-crushing, leg-snapping, head-smashing enemy. They watched with quick, cynical eyes, knowing how the need of the stevedore contractor<sup>8</sup> to fill the ship more quickly for greater profit might cost a life here and there that, on that waterfront,<sup>9</sup> was valued only by its possessor.

Timothy, looking up too, had seen something suddenly beside the blank rectangle of sky and the rusted superstructure of the pier. A bird flying. A gull flying whitely against the sky. And suddenly, in the splendor of that clean, swift movement, in the casual lordliness with which it had soared past the mouth of the hold, the man was inexplicably, maddeningly reminded of another place and of another time.

So he sat in the sun. Instead of walking home for the lunch he knew his wife had prepared for him or drinking beer in one of the waterfront saloons or playing rummy<sup>10</sup> in the shade of the elevated highway he sat heavily and tiredly in the sun. And in his heart was the sadness known only to an Irishman who has not seen Ireland in thirty-five years..

There was rheum in the corners of his bleary eyes and his mouth tasted bitterly and slimily of that last night's bad whiskey. His unwieldy old body hardly moved. Only his hands clenched and unclenched in response to the surges of memory that made him ache where he had been dull so long, soft where he had been hard. His hands that alone of all the bloat and weariness of his body gave some sign of the man he had been; his hands that were of a hardness and a texture beyond description.

For what will describe a worker's hands? To what familiar substance will you compare them? These, certainly, were not flesh but seemed some indestructible material that would, when he died, alone confound the inexorable law of the grave. \*

Only when one of the birds, flapping hard, left the water to fly, like a white arrow in a fairy tale, past the gas tanks and the gay columns of factory smoke, did he move his

head but then he would turn back to stare at the vicious surface of the river, frowning as he found it so difficult accurately to remember.

The Shannon<sup>11</sup> this far in from the sea was clear and green. He remembered it cold and exciting on his bare, young body. The boys would run down through the neat, cobbled streets toward the river wharves and the green, weedy bank, their voices endlessly singing, it seemed at this great distance, after these many years.

The houses were white and in the bare stone kitchens the fires smelled of peat and of fog. The houses were white, the streets were filled with the small port's sights and sounds and over all, in the weak-as-water Irish sunlight, flew the gulls.

When there was fog the birds stood easily, in rows, on the pilings or on the shed roofs, or they flew unseen as ghosts in the mist. But when there was sunlight, the rare, much-loved sunlight of old men and young boys, the gulls swirled back and forth from the ocean, crying their loud cries, as white in the sky as new linen handkerchiefs.

White and clean. But how white they seemed now. And had the houses too been that white? And the streets so clean? And had the boys always sung that bravely and had he ever really been young at all?

Christ, Christ! When is a man old? When does a man die? The Shannon was green and clear and cold. It had never been like this oily sewer of a river, and if the sun had not been this strong ever, what good was sunlight now that he was so old, so heavy, so tired? The gulls only were the same, rising from the river as these did and swooping so grandly.

The freighter's sharp whistle made the birds rise dripping and protesting into the resumed bustle of the docks. Lunch hour was over and the men, jostling and pushing, came out of the pier sides and clambered aboard the ship. Reluctantly, grunting as he straightened, Timothy got up and went with them.

Up on the deck, waiting his turn to descend the ladder, he looked at the men about him, listening with new perception to their loud Irish and Croatian and Polish voices. Here and there was a head with gray hair showing, like Timothy's, beneath the celluloid union button<sup>12</sup> pinned to the side of his cap. There were not many, though. You came on the docks a young man, like the kids pushing each other now over the coiled hawsers on the deck. You came young and you stayed and one morning, with the winches screaming at you, you looked up from the smell and darkness of the hold to see a gull flying and you were old.

Turning, he followed the gang, for the ship was waiting. Waiting to be fed and filled, waiting to bulge her sides and, being sated, swing ponderously into the river tide, bellow and yowl as she nosed out toward the bay, toward all the rest of the world.

Down the creaking ladders they climbed, into the deep caverns, the winches already in full steam and the nets swinging into the air to drop quickly after them to the bottom.

The first one hit with a thud that shook the entire ship, the smashed bottom layer of boxes spewing dried fruit and splinters over the deck. "Ya missed us, ya blind bastard. G'wan, try again". The young fellows shouted their derision and threw prunes at each other. But everyone had jumped fast enough this time, and the work resumed.

Bend and lift. Bend and straighten. Swing slow and sweat easy. It was a heavy, tiring, dull, man's job and into it Timothy Whelan brought new, angry strength. Into it he brought all his awakened sadness and resentment, all the mad questions of his life. His hands reached out as if the crates themselves were Life, as if there could be strangled from them some answer, some one truth.

Where had the time gone? Thirty-five years. Thirty-five years since he had left Ireland.

The town had been hilly and bright lying there next to the dark river. "The first port on the River Shannon," the old men were fond of boasting. The fields were close to it and it was never quite clear who was townsman and who was not among the boys so that in the humming, tough Christian Brothers' school<sup>13</sup> the small feuds were quickly begun and as quickly abated. They had all been brothers, or so it seemed now. But what was certain now? The dim memories? The time-weakened chord of sight and sound and smell? What could be trusted here in the steel depths, in the noise and sweat that was the end of thirty-five years?

"Duck!"<sup>14</sup> The gang scattered in under the protecting decks as another net plunged toward them too fast, smashing into the deck and throwing broken sides of boxes in every direction.

No one knew better than the men that the nets were overloaded, too cumbersome and heavy to be handled correctly by the donkeyman.<sup>15</sup> Yet it was on him, the closest of their enemies, that they showered their anger.

"One more load like that and I'm gonna go up and kill that sunnuvabitch".

"That guy's trynna murder the whole bunch of us".

But Timothy, usually louder than the rest in any denunciation of the bosses or of the corrupt union leaders, silently sat on a crate waiting for the debris<sup>16</sup> to be cleared, looking up past the arguing faces and the still quivering cable to the sky.

\* \* \*

The girls had been red-checked and laughing, and hadn't it been fine to be a hero for them? "Norah, this is Timmy Whelan, who's going to America". And he had had his last town speech and a great way of dancing and always there were the fields, green and sweet-smelling and waiting.

Where now was the faith of his wedding day? Where was the young girl and where were the years and the promises? Ten years after leaving the old country he had married, hold-



ing the hand of his Catherine before the altar of the Church of the Sacred Heart and saying the old promises with all the pride and arrogance and assurance for which the girl loved him.

Timothy and what was left of his family lived, as did all the other longshoremen and their families, near the docks. Their tenement was only two blocks from the river and when the "Mary" or the "Lizzy" blew their big horns the whole house shook, the children muttering in their sleep and the young men telling in the hot night of distant places. From the roof you could look down between the factories and the thrusting stacks to see the shaded cliffs of the opposite shore, see the blocks of river-ice in the blue water on bright winter mornings, see the tightcircling flocks of slum pigeons; and the masts of the great ships as they lay being loaded and pampered at the black piers. It was necessary that the longshoremen lived not too far from the docks on which they made their living, for longshoremen do not have jobs to which they go every day at eight, certain that it is there, knowing they can go home at night in the reasonably secure knowledge of being able to repeat the process the next day and the next. The men of the docks work only when there are ships to be unloaded or loaded and when such is the case they must be close to the scene of their hiring. It's then that they stand on the cobbled waterfront in any weather, in a crowd of their fellows, while a boss stevedore picks with a thrust of his cigar stump here and there and turns his back on the rest. His word is the law and his choice the core of their lives. By it they work or not and their children eat or go hungry and the rent for their tenement flat is paid or not. So they live close to the shape-up<sup>17</sup> and, their wishes and hopes notwithstanding, they live for it. Therefore the necessity to live in the waterfront tenements, the long rows of brick rat warrens<sup>18</sup> that line the waterfront avenues and streets mile after mile; the crumbling, blankfaced buildings in which generation after generation grows in the same vermin and noises and smells.

It was there that the Whelans lived and at night Timothy and his wife would sit on either side of the enameltopped kitchen table listening to the sounds of the lives crowded in around them and wondering what was in the mind of the other, knowing the profound loneliness of aged parents whose children have gone from them.

"This is Timmy Whelan who's going to America". Well, this was his America. The years of struggle and defeat, the ceaseless washing away of hope. His children were married and gone, for what was there to keep them? His children were dead, for what was there to save them? This was his America; the end of strength.

"You're a fine strong lad, Timmy," his father had said, "and when you get to America you'll be thankful for it".

Timothy looked up to the sky to where the gulls flew eastward. That way was to the ocean, to Ireland. Thirty-five years.

"Look out!"<sup>19</sup>

The net, coming into the hold too fast, its weight straining the machinery beyond endurance, swung against the side of the hold and, caught there for a moment on some projection, spilled sideways, vomiting part of its contents. For a moment as he turned toward safety Timothy watched the boxes hurtling down, blocking out the sky, hiding the gulls. Then in that moment before he had even completed the swift turn his copper-toed shoe slid on a mass of crushed prunes and he fell forward, hunching as he fell, knowing in the instant that this would be his answer, his only answer. Quickly, allowing no other thought or feeling, the crates smashed into and were smashed by the bones of his legs and back.

"Go to America, Timmy," his father had said, "for Jesus knows there's nothing here for a lad."

Thirty-five years.

The shoes in front of his face must belong to Kelly, for only he, as gang foreman, would dare come on the job without safety shoes. There were other shoes moving in the limits

of his vision but there seemed no way to identify them. Certainly he could not look up, could not turn his cheek from the blessed coolness of the deck. The voices came from a place of echoes and great distances.

"Go ahead, Kelly, tell us that one wasn't overloaded. Go ahead, you bastard, tell us about bad luck."

"If you guys will stop yapping long enough," retorted the thick voice of the foreman, "we can empty the net and lift him to hell out of here."

"We'll lift him out all right, Kelly. But not the way we'll lift you out someday. You and the whole damned, stinking set-up."<sup>20</sup>

The men lifted him with the tender hands of comrades onto boards and then into the emptied net. There was only the broken weight of his body and the warm blood choking him. Up above the cable straightening and the net began to rise.

Past the staring, white laces and the hanging ropes and tarpaulins, thrusting suddenly, completely into the sun's glare. Rising more and more swiftly into the light, into the bright sky where, far above the docks and the ships, the noise and the stink, the tenements and the shadow of time gone, the gulls flew.

They flew to the East, toward the ocean, the ancient, cleansing ocean, toward Ireland, toward home.

*Thomas Wolfe*

## THE COMPANY

George considered himself lucky to have the little room over the Shepperton garage. He was also glad that his visit had overlapped that of Mr. David Merrit, and that Mr. Merrit had been allowed to enjoy undisturbed the greater comfort of the Shepperton guest room, for Mr. Merrit had filled him with a pleasant glow at their first meeting. He was a ruddy, plump, well-kept man of forty-five or so, always ready with a joke and immensely agreeable, with pockets bulging with savory cigars which he handed out to people on the slightest provocation. Randy had spoken of him as "the Company's man," and although George did not know what the duties of a "Company's man" were, Mr. Merrit made them seem very pleasant.

George knew, of course, that Mr. Merrit was Randy's boss and he learned that Mr. Merrit was in the habit of coming to town every two or three months. He would arrive like a benevolent, pink-checked Santa Claus, making his jolly little jokes, passing out his fat cigars, putting his arm around people's shoulders, and, in general, making everyone feel good. As he said himself:

"I've got to turn up now and then just to see that the boys are behaving themselves, and not taking in any wooden nickels."

Here he winked at George in such a comical way that all of them had to grin. Then he gave George a big cigar.

His functions seemed to be ambassadorial. He was always taking Randy and the salesmen of the Company out to lunch or dinner, and save for brief visits to the office, he seemed to spend most of his time inaugurating an era of good feeling and high living. He would go around town and meet everybody, slapping people on the back and calling them by their first names, and for a week after he had left the businessmen of Libya Hill would still be smoking his cigars. When he came to town he always stayed "out at the house," and one knew that Margaret would prepare her best meals for him, and that there would be some good drinks. Mr. Merrit supplied the drinks himself, for he always brought along a plentiful store of expensive beverages. George could see at their first meeting that he was the kind of man who exudes an aura of good fellowship, and that was why it was so pleasant to have Mr. Merrit staying in the house.

Mr. Merrit was not only a nice fellow. He was also "with the Company," and George soon realized that "the Company" was a vital and mysterious force in all their lives. Randy had gone with it as soon as he left college. He had been sent to the main office, up North somewhere, and had been put through a course of training. Then he had come back South and had worked his way up from salesman to district agent-- an important member of the sales organization.

"The Company," "district agent," "the sales organization"--mysterious titles all of them, but most comforting. During the week George was in Libya Hill with Randy and Margaret, Mr. Merrit was usually on hand at meal times, and at night he would sit out on the front porch with them and carry on in his jolly way, joking and laughing and giving them all a good time. Sometimes he would talk shop<sup>2</sup> with Randy, telling stories about the Company and about his own experiences in the organization and before long George began to pick up a pretty good idea of what it was all about.

The Federal Weight, Scales, and Computing Company was a far-flung empire which had a superficial aspect of great complexity, but in its essence it was really beautifully simple. Its heart and soul—indeed, its very life—was its sales organization.

The entire country was divided into districts, and over each district an agent was appointed. This agent, in turn, employed salesmen to cover the various portions of his district. Each district also had an "office man" to attend to any business that might come up while the agent and his salesmen were away, and a "repair man" whose duty it was to overhaul damaged or broken-down machines. Together, these comprised the agency, and the country was so divided that there was, on the average, an agency for every unit of half a million people in the total population. Thus there were two hundred and sixty or seventy agencies through the nation, and the agents with their salesmen made up a working force of from twelve to fifteen hundred men.

The higher purposes of this industrial empire, which the employees almost never referred to by name, as who should speak of the deity with coarse directness, but always with a just perceptible lowering and huskiness of the voice as "the Company"—these higher purposes were also beautifully simple. They were summed up in the famous utterance of the Great Man himself, Mr. Paul S. Appleton, III, who invariably repeated it every year as a peroration to his hour-long address before the assembled members of the sales organization at their national convention. Standing before them at the close of each year's session, he would sweep his arm in a gesture of magnificent command toward an enormous map of the United States of America that covered the whole wall behind him and say:

"There's your market! Go out and sell them!"

What could be simpler and more beautiful than this? What could more eloquently indicate that mighty sweep of the imagination which has been celebrated in the annals of modern business under the name of "vision"? The words

had the spacious scope and austere directness that have characterized the utterances of great leaders in every epoch of man's history. It is Napoleon speaking to his troops in Egypt: "Soldiers, from the summit of yonder pyramids, forty centuries look down upon you." It is Captain Perry: "We have met the enemy, and they are ours." It is Dewey at Manila Bay: "You may fire when ready, Gridley." It is Grant before Spottsylvania Court House: "I propose to fight it out on this line, if it takes all summer."<sup>3</sup>

So when Mr. Paul S. Appleton, III, waved his arm at the wall and said: "There's your market! Go out and sell them!"—the assembled captains, lieutenants and privates in the ranks of his sales organization knew that there were still giants on the earth, and that the age of romance was not dead.

True, there had once been a time when the aspirations of the Company had been more limited. That was when the founder of the institution, the grandfather of Mr. Paul S. Appleton, III, had expressed his modest hopes by saying: "I should like to see one of my machines in every store, shop, or business that needs one, and that can afford to pay for one." But the self-denying restrictions implicit in the founder's statement had long since become so out of date as to seem utterly mid-Victorian.<sup>4</sup> Mr. David Merrit admitted it himself. Much as he hated to speak ill of any man, and especially the founder of the Company, he had to confess that by the standards of 1929 the old gentleman had lacked vision.

"That's old stuff now," said Mr. Merrit, shaking his head and winking at George as though to take the curse off of his treason to the founder by making a joke of it. "We've gone way beyond that!" he exclaimed with pardonable pride. "Why, if we waited nowadays to sell a machine to someone who *needs one*, we'd get nowhere." He was nodding now at Randy, and speaking with the seriousness of deep conviction. "We don't wait until he *needs one*. If he says he's getting along all right without one, we make him buy one any-

how. We make him *see* the need, don't we, Randy? In other words, we *create* the need."

\* This as Mr. Merrit went on to explain, was what is known in more technical phrase as "creative salesmanship" or "creating the market." And this poetic conception was the inspired work of one man—none other than the present head of the Company, Mr. Paul S. Appleton, III, himself. The idea had come to him in a single blinding flash, born full-blown like Pallas Athene from the head of Zeus,<sup>6</sup> and Mr. Merrit still remembered the momentous occasion as vividly as if it had been only yesterday. It was at one of the meetings of the assembled parliaments of the Company that Mr. Appleton, soaring in an impassioned flight of oratory, became so intoxicated with the grandeur of his own vision that he stopped abruptly in the middle of a sentence and stood there as one entranced, gazing out dreamily into the unknown vistas of magic Canaan;<sup>7</sup> and when he at last went on again, it was in a voice surcharged with quivering emotion:

"My friends," he said, "the possibilities of the market, now that we see how to create it, are practically unlimited." Here he was silent for a moment, and Mr. Merrit said that the Great Man actually paled and seemed to stagger as he tried to speak, and that his voice faltered and sank to an almost inaudible whisper, as if he himself could hardly comprehend the magnitude of his own conception. "My friends—" he muttered thickly, and was seen to clutch the rostrum for support—"my friends—seen properly—" he whispered, and moistened his dry lips—"seen properly—the market we shall create being what it is—" his voice grew stronger, and the clarion words now rang forth—"there is no reason why one of our machines should not be in the possession of every man, woman, and child in the United States!" Then came the grand, familiar gesture to the map: "There's your market, boys! Go out and sell them!" \*

Henceforth this vision became the stone on which Mr. Paul S. Appleton, III, erected the magnificent edifice of the true church and living faith which was called "the Compa-



ny." And in the service of this vision Mr. Appleton built up an organization which worked with the beautiful precision of a locomotive piston. Over the salesman was the agent, and over the agent was the district supervisor, and over the district supervisor was the district manager, and over the district manager was the general manager, and over the general manager was--if not God himself, then the next thing to it, for the agents and salesmen referred to him in tones of proper reverence as "P.S.A."

Mr. Appleton also invented a special Company Heaven known as the Hundred Club. Its membership was headed by P.S.A., and all the ranks of the sales organization were eligible, down to the humblest salesman. The Hundred Club was a social order,<sup>h</sup> but it was also a good deal more than that. Each agent and salesman had a "quota"—that is to say, a certain amount of business which was assigned to him as the normal average of his district and capacity. A man's quota differed from another's according to the size of his territory, its wealth, and his own experience and ability. One man's quota would be sixty, another's eighty, another's ninety or one hundred, and if he was a district agent, his quota would be higher than that of a mere salesman. Each man, however, no matter how small or how large his quota might be, was eligible for membership in the Hundred Club, the only restriction being that he must average one hundred per cent of his quota. If he averaged more—if he got, say, one hundred and twenty per cent of his quota—there were appropriate honors and rewards, not only social but financial as well. One could be either high up or low down in the Hundred Club, for it had almost as many degrees of merit as the Masonic order.

But what would Heaven be if there were no Hell? So Mr. Appleton was forced by the logic of the situation to invent a Hell, too. Once a man's quota was fixed at any given point, the Company never reduced it. Moreover, if a salesman's quota was eighty points and he achieved it during the year, he must be prepared at the beginning of the new year

to find that his quota had been increased to ninety points. One had to go onward and upward constantly, and the race was to be swift.

While it was quite true that membership in the Hundred Club was not compulsory, it was also true that Mr. Paul S. Appleton, III, was a theologian who, like Calvin, knew how to combine free will and predestination. If one did *not* belong to the Hundred Club, the time was not far distant when one would not belong to Mr. Appleton. Not to belong to it was, for agent or salesman, the equivalent of living on the other side of the railroad tracks. If one failed of admission to the Company Heaven, or if one dropped out, his fellows would begin to ask guardedly: "Where's Joe Klutz these days?" The answers would be vague, and in the course of time Joe Klutz would be spoken of no more. He would fade into oblivion. He was "no longer with the Company."

Mr. Paul S. Appleton, III, never had but the one revelation—the one which Mr. Merrit so movingly described—but that was enough, and he never let its glories and allurements grow dim. Four times a year, at the beginning of each quarter, he would call his general manager before him and say: "What's the matter, Elmer? You're not getting the business! The market is *there*! You know what you can do about it—or else...!" Thereupon the general manager would summon the district managers one by one and repeat to them the words and manner of P.S.A., and the district managers would reenact the scene before each of the district supervisors, who would duplicate it to the agents, who would pass it on to the salesmen, who, since they had no one below them, would "get out and hustle—or else!" This was called "keeping up the morale of the organization."

As Mr. David Merrit sat on the front porch and told of his many experiences with the Company, his words conveyed to George Webber a great deal more than he actually said. For his talk went on and on in its vein of mellow reminiscence, and Mr. Merrit made his little jokes and puffed contentedly at one of his own good cigars, and everything

he said carried an overtone of "What a fine and wonderful thing it is to be connected with the Company!"

He told, for example, about the splendid occasion every year when all the members of the Hundred Club were brought together for what was known as "The Week of Play." This was a magnificent annual outing conducted "at the Company's expense." The meeting place might be in Philadelphia or Washington, or in the tropic opulence of Los Angeles or Miami, or it might be on board a chartered ship—one of the small but luxurious twenty thousand-tonners that ply the transatlantic routes—bound to Bermuda or Havana. Wherever it was, the Hundred Club was given a free sweep. If the journey was by sea, the ship was theirs—for a week. All the liquor in the world was theirs, if they could drink it—and Bermuda's coral isles, or the unlicensed privilege of gay Havana.<sup>9</sup> For that one week everything on earth that money could buy was at the command of the members of the Hundred Club, everything was done on the grand scale, and the Company—the immortal, paternal, and great hearted Company—"paid for everything."

But as Mr Merrit painted his glowing picture of the fun they had on these occasions, George Webber saw quite another image. It was an image of twelve or fifteen hundred men—for on these pilgrimages, by general consent, women (or at any rate, wives) were debarréd—twelve or fifteen hundred men, Americans, most of them in their middle years, exhausted, overwrought, their nerves frayed down and stretched to the breaking point, met from all quarters of the continent "at the Company's expense" for one brief, wild, gaudy week of riot. And George thought grimly what this tragic spectacle of businessmen at play meant in terms of the entire scheme of things and the plan of life that had produced it. He began to understand, too, the changes which time had brought about in Randy

The last day of his week in Libya Hill, George had gone to the station to buy his return ticket and he stopped in at Randy's office a little before one o'clock to go home to lunch with him. The outer salesroom, with its shining stock of scales and computing machines imposingly arrayed on walnut pedestals, was deserted, so he sat down to wait. On one wall hung a gigantic colored poster. "August Was the Best Month in Federal History," it read. "*Make September a Better One!* The Market's There, Mr. Agent. The Rest Is Up to You!"

Behind the salesroom was a little partitioned space which served Randy as an office. As George waited, gradually he became aware of mysterious sounds emanating from beyond the partition. First there was the rustle of heavy paper, as if the pages of a ledger were being turned, and occasionally there would be a quick murmur of hushed voices, confidential, ominous, interspersed with grunts and half-suppressed exclamations. Then all at once there were two loud bangs, as of a large ledger being slammed shut and thrown upon a desk or table, and after a moment's silence the voices rose louder, distinct, plainly audible. Instantly he recognized Randy's voice—low, grave, hesitant, and deeply troubled. The other voice he had never heard before.

But as he listened to that voice he began to tremble and grow white about the lips. For its very tone was a foul insult to human life, an ugly sneer shipped across the face of decent humanity, and as he realized that that voice, these words, were being used against his friend, he had a sudden blind feeling of murder in his heart. And what was so perplexing and so troubling was that this devil's voice had in it as well a curiously familiar note, as of someone he had known.

Then it came to him in a flash—it was Merrit speaking! The owner of that voice, incredible as it seemed, was none other than that plump, well-kept, jolly-looking man who had always been so full of hearty cheerfulness and good spirits every time he had seen him.

Now, behind that little partition of glazed glass and varnished wood, this man's voice had suddenly become fiendish. It was inconceivable, and as George listened he grew sick as one does in some awful nightmare when he visions someone he knows doing some perverse and abominable act. But what was more dreadful of all was Randy's voice, humble, low, submissive, modestly entreating. Merrit's voice would cut across the air like a gob of rasping phlegm, and then Randy's voice—gentle, hesitant, deeply troubled—would come in from time to time in answer.

"Well, what's the matter? Don't you want the job?"

"Why—why, yes, you know I do, Dave—haw-w—" and Randy's voice lifted a little in a troubled and protesting laugh.

"What's the matter that you're not getting the business?"

"Why—haw-w!—" again the little laugh, embarrassed and troubled—"I *thought* I was—"

"Well, you're not!" that rasping voice cut in like a knife. "This district ought to deliver thirty per cent more business than you're getting from it, and the Company is going to have it, too—or else! You deliver or you go right out on your can! See? The Company doesn't give a damn about you! It's after the business! You've been around a long time, but you don't mean a damn bit more to the Company than anybody else! And you know what's happened to a lot of other guys who got to feeling they were too big for their job—don't you?"

"Why—why, yes, Dave—but—haw-w!" the little laugh again—"but—honestly, I never thought—"

"We don't give a damn what you never thought!" the brutal voice ripped in. "I've given you fair warning now! You get the business or out you go!"

The glazed glass door burst open violently and Merrit came striding out of the little partitioned office. When he saw George, he looked startled. Then he was instantly transformed. His plump and ruddy face became wreathed in smiles, and he cried out in a hearty tone:

"Well, well, well! Look who's here! Is it's not the old boy himself!"

Randy had followed him out, and Merrit now turned and winked humorously at him, in the manner of a man who is carrying on a little bantering byplay:

"Randy," he said, "I believe George gets better looking from day to day. Has he broken any hearts yet?"

Randy tried to smile, grey-faced and haggardly.

"I bet you're burning them up in the Big Town," said Merrit, turning back to George. "And, say, I read that piece in the paper about your book. Great stuff, son! We're all proud of you!"

He gave George a hearty slap on the back and turned away with an air of jaunty readiness, picked up his hat, and said cheerfully:

"Well, what d'ya say, foks? What about one of Margaret's famous meals, out at the old homestead? Well, you can't hurt my feelings. I'm ready if you are. Let's go!"

And, smiling, ruddy, plump, cheerful, a perverted picture of amiable good will to all the world, he sauntered through the door. For a moment the two old friends just stood there looking at each other, white and haggard, with a bewildered expression in their eyes. In Randy's eyes there was also a look of shame. With that instinct for loyalty which was one of the roots of his soul, he said:

"Dave's a good fellow. . . You—you see, he's got to do these things. . . . He—he's with the Company."

George didn't say anything. For as Randy spoke, and George remembered all that Merrit had told him about the Company, a terrific picture flashed through his mind. It was a picture he had seen in a gallery somewhere, portraying a long line of men stretching from the Great Pyramid to the very portals of great Pharaoh's house, and great Pharaoh stood with a thonged whip in his hand and applied it unmercifully to the bare back and shoulders of the man in front of him, who was great Pharaoh's chief overseer, and in the hand of the overseer was a whip of many tails which he

unstintedly applied to the quivering back of the wretch before him, who was the chief overseer's chief lieutenant, and in the lieutenant's hand a whip of rawhide which he laid vigorously on the quailing body of his head sergeant, and in the sergeant's hand a wicked flail with which he belabored a whole company of groaning corporals, and in the hands of every corporal a knotted lash with which to whack a whole regiment of slaves, who pulled and hauled and bore burdens and toiled and sweated and built the towering structure of the pyramid.

So George didn't say anything. He couldn't. He had just found out something about life that he had not known before.

## EXODUS

The store was an island in the cotton. The long straight rows of dusty-green plants came to the edge of the hard-packed yard. The hard-fleshed men with lean faces were gathered in the shade of the porch. There were fourteen of them—all the men who worked on the place.

Jeff Upchurch, sitting on the bottom step, was the first to see the little boil of dust slowly creeping along the field road that followed the section-line out of sight. He looked at his big hands. They moved convulsively on his thighs. He tightened them slowly, squeezing his kneecaps.

With hawg-killing<sup>1</sup> or a sick mule, I know what to do, he thought. This I don't know. He could feel their waiting and he waited with them, trying to think of an answer. But there wasn't one. A slow anger at himself began to move inside him.

"Why don't the gover'nment do something about it?" Clate Boggs said.

"The gover'nment!" Luther Moats said.

The car was nearer now and Jeff heard the men stop talking. They had seen it, and the knowledge went among them instantaneously, without words. There's something about their eyes, he thought; they're so tired and scared and empty.



A man's gotta help 'em when he sees them eyes a-lookin' at him.

Jeff wondered why he was different, why he had never been scared inside like they were. For one thing, he was bigger than most of these men. Everything about him was big: his hands, his shoulders, his plain, heavy-boned face, browned by working in the sun. Beside him the others were stoop-shouldered, meagre men with frightened eyes.

But the difference was more than that of size. Maybe it was because he had gone away from here—he had traveled and worked, for five years. He remembered the jobs, saw-mills, shipyards, the sweating work, the lifeless sleeping in the night, the cheap whisky and the fights and the women on Saturday night.

He remembered how everything seemed smaller and shabbier when he came back. But the people were still the same. Even thirty-six-cent wartime cotton had not made any difference in their lives. Some of the younger men had been away during the war, had even been overseas, but they seemed unchanged, too.

He wondered why he had come back and why he stayed. After a while he married, and maybe that had something to do with it. But his wife was dead now—had been dead a year—and he had not remarried. But still he stayed.

His mind swung back to the whispered talk of the machines that had brought these men here together. There's got to be a way out, he thought. Maybe Mr. Gregory knows a way. He's a smart man.

A pulse pumped in his throat. The car was nearer now, and it was Mr. Gregory's Ford, as he had known it would be. The men were moving around, standing up, brushing the seats of their over-alls with their hard, calloused hands. He remained sitting. Mr. Gregory stopped the car, got out and walked through the yard toward the store, his shiny black shoes puffing up the dust.

"Good mawning," he said, moving his hand in a gesture that included everyone on the porch. No one said anything.

They stared at him with waiting eyes, grouped against him, against his friendliness. They all set to blame him, Jeff thought.

"Good mawning, Mr. Gregory," Jeff said.

"It's shore hot," Mr. Gregory said. He ran a crooked finger over his forehead and flipped the sweat from it. He was as tall and lean as the overalled men on the porch, but he did not have their worked-down hardness. The men liked Mr. Gregory, but today their massed hostility kept him standing in the yard, instead of joining them in the shade.

"Yessir," Jeff said. "It's shore making that old cotton pop out."<sup>2</sup>

Mr. Gregory did not say anything. Jeff knew he had to keep on with it. It would be better knowing definitely even if it was bad.

"I'm ready to grab that old cottonsaek," he said. "Just you give the word, I'll straddle me a row and start grabbing cotton."

He could feel the waiting of the men. He faced the silent stiffness of Mr. Gregory. He saw then, in his face, that Mr. Gregory was scared and lost, too. Jeff's chest tightened until he couldn't breathe. If Mr. Gregory don't know, what can I do, he thought.

For the first time he felt some of the fear that the other men carried with them all the time—a fear of a life that was too complex for them. And for the first time he knew why they depended on him. He had never been afraid before. His hands began moving aimlessly again.

Mr. Gregory's face was grim. He looked at the dusty toes of his shoes and remained silent. Jeff knew the answer to the question. but he had to ask it anyhow.

"When we gonna start picking?"<sup>3</sup> he said. "That cotton just begging right now."

"We ain't gonna start picking," Mr. Gregory said, his voice flat and toneless. He raised his head and looked at the men. A noise like a sigh ran through them as he repeated the word. "We ain't gonna start picking."

"They been talking about them things for years," Clate Boggs said. "They just talk about 'em to keep the price of picking down. Them machines ain't gonna never work".

His voice was tight and desperate, and he said it to convince himself. Mr. Gregory shook his head. "There's two Rust cotton-pickers<sup>4</sup> coming down here tomorrow," he said. "They're going to pick all the cotton. Might be a little scrap-pin<sup>5</sup> to do by hand."

"We can't pick scrap-pin's," Jeff said.

"Them cotton-pickers ain't gonna git that cotton picked," Luther Moats said. He looked around angrily. "They can't pick that cotton with all them leaves on it."

"They're going to spray the cotton with stuff to make the leaves fall off," Mr. Gregory said.

"What we gonna do, Mr. Gregory?" Jeff said. "We got to make us a living some way. Don't they think about that?"

"They can't afford to think about it," Mr. Gregory said. "It costs forty dollars a bale, hand-picking, and it just costs five dollars a bale machine-picked. They got to think about thirty-five dollars."

"That's all right for them," Jeff said. "That ain't gonna help us none. What we gonna do?"

"I don't know," Mr. Gregory said. "They say you can work in the mills. They say a lot of new factories are coming in. They say that'll take care of everything."

"They say," Jeff said. "When they coming? Ain't nothing here now but that little old shirt factory. When they coming in?"

"Maybe next year," Mr. Gregory said. "You-all can still stay here. Mr. Phillips said so himself."

"We got to eat," Jeff said patiently. He could feel frustration building up inside him. "Them factories ain't no good till they built. What we gonna do till then?"

"Don't ask me," Mr. Gregory said. "I don't know."

"I reckon by God you still fixed good," Luther Moats said. "I reckon you still got a good job".

"Ain't no use getting mad at Mr. Gregory," Jeff said. "He can't hep it."

Jeff heard a drone in the distance. It was an airplane, flying only a few metres above the ground. It was throwing out a fanshaped white spray that settled slowly on the cotton. The men's heads turned, following it.

Once, in town, Jeff had seen a wild squirrel in a cage. The squirrel ran madly from one side of the cage to the other, until finally it collapsed, exhausted from terror and effort. Jeff felt the way the squirrel must have felt in that cage. The other men could feel the fear in Jeff, too. It made them restless and uncertain.

"They can't do it," Luther Moats said. "We ain't gonna let 'em do it."

As Jeff watched the airplane, all the thinking went out of his mind and left a blank. Into the emptiness words screamed themselves. I got to get outa here. A compelling urge to get up and walk away down the road took hold of him. He wanted to run down the road, run until he had left the fear and the unknowing behind him. There ain't nothing holding me here, he thought, I can go. I can walk right on away from this thing.

"It's their cotton, Luther," Mr Gregory said. "There ain't no way to stop 'em."

"I reckon by God we can stop 'em with shotguns," Luther said—"They can't make a man set down and starve. They, by God, can't do that."

Jeff saw the faces come toward him. There was a haze before his eyes, blurring the faces. They waited for him, but there was nothing he could say, nothing he could tell them. He sat there miserably, anger at his own weakness boiling in him, anger at not knowing. His big-knuckled hands began moving again as if they had a life of their own. In the moment, they waited for him to speak, and it seemed to stretch out interminably, to hang suspended in space, cut off from the moments before and those that would come after. Then the faces turned away from him, and the moment was gone,

and they were looking at Luther Moats again, and waiting for him instead of Jeff. A growing mutter of anger swelled in their throats. Luther stepped out of the crowd and faced Mr. Gregory.

"You tell 'em them machines come in here, we gonna be setting here with shotguns. You tell 'em that, and see if them machines come."

"You just git yourself in trouble," Mr. Gregory said. "You know Mr. Phillips when he gits mad."

The plane was coming back now. It flashed by with a thundering roar. Jeff watched it go past and dwindle into the distance. I'm gonna get up from here and walk away, he told himself. I ain't no use here. Maybe Luther's right—maybe shotguns are the way, I don't know. He thought about the jobs and the Saturday nights, the hot concrete sidewalks, the crowds of people.

"They're coming," Mr. Gregory said. "They'll start picking in the morning."

"You tell 'em," Luther said fiercely. He looked around at the men. The anger in their faces drained away the blood, making them pale under their burned skins. "You just tell 'em."

This thing bigger'n me, Jeff thought miserably. I can't hep 'em any. I just's well git outa here.

Mr. Gregory opened his mouth. He looked at Jeff. Jeff tried to act as if he did not see Mr. Gregory. Mr. Gregory closed his mouth and moved his hands helplessly. He turned around and went back to the car. He got in and drove away in a boof of swirling dust.

Jeff stood up and started for the road. He forced himself to walk instead of run. The words kept going over and over in his mind. I can walk right out of here.

"What you gonna do, Jeff?" Luther said. Some of the anger had gone out of his voice and with it the drive that had carried him out in front of the men. The waiting had started again, waiting for him.

"I don't know," Jeff said, stopping. "I don't know what there is to do."

"You know what's gonna happen," Luther said. "Just like what happened in Oklahoma during the depression. There'll be tractors in the fields next spring."

"I know all that," Jeff said. "I know ever' bit of it."

"I don't aim to set here and twiddle my thumbs and listen to my hungry kids squalling," Luther said. "I, by God, don't aim to do that. All's left is cotton-chopping for us to do. It ain't noways near enough."

Jeff turned around again and started walking.

"You gonna be here tomorrow?" Luther said.

Jeff stopped and looked at the men. Their faces were white with anger and fear, but their eyes pleaded with him. If it was a sick cow or a snake-bit man, he said desperately within himself.

"You-all aim to be here?" he said.

"You damn right—" Luther started to say.

"Shut up, Luke," Jeff said. "You-all aim to be here?"

"I reckon we do," Glenn Brothers said. "I reckon we got to be here."

"Ain't gonna work, anyhow," Old Man Peeks said.

Jeff stared at them. "It ain't gonna hep any," he said. "But I gotta be here, too, then."

He turned around again and walked away from them, down the dusty road. The plane roared overhead on the return trip. This time it was close enough to throw the white dust over the store. I can still go, Jeff said to himself. Even after tomorrow I can go. I can't hep but be here tomorrow, but after that. . . .

Jeff was glad when the sun went down. He had been walking for a long time and the sun threw a hot glare up at his face from the concrete highway. He walked steadily, without haste, as if he knew where he was going and had the rest of time to get there.

The memory of the day stirred a constant nauseating sickness in his stomach, and he couldn't walk away from it. He plodded along the highway, his feet making a shuffling noise in the silence. The feeling of sick defeat had started this morning when he saw the pickers coming. He had been there with his shotgun, just like the rest. And, sitting there, he had felt it beginning to churn as he looked at the squat ugliness of the machines that were coming down the field road.

They looked strange and bestial, creeping slowly along, a gloved driver sitting high up on the seat. There were two of them, following in a Buick. Jeff knew them both: Mr. Gregory and the other--Mr. Phillips. Ever since he was a kid, he could remember seeing Mr. Phillips driving about the place in his big car. He could remember standing before Mr. Phillips' big glass-topped desk in the bank, while his deep-set eyes looked at Jeff without seeing him.

Luther, at least on the outside, was confident in the strength of the men and the guns. He stepped away from the group, shotgun under his arm, as the car and the pickers stopped in the store yard. He walked with a strange tenseness that reminded Jeff of a game rooster<sup>6</sup> ready to fight.

He waited until the thin, suave man in the pin-striped suit<sup>7</sup> got out of the car. Mr. Gregory got out and stood by his side.

"Git them things outa here, Mr. Phillips," Luther said, anger and fear prowling behind his voice.

Mr. Phillips stood with his slender, gloved hand on the fender of his expensive Buick, and his handsome, chiseled face turned slowly, surveying the men.

"Mr. Gregory told me what you men said," he said, his voice soft and infuriatingly reasonable.

"We know what we doing," Luther said. "Them cotton-pickers ain't going in that field."

Jeff sat on the porch, staring at the ground. I oughta be out there, he thought, but I know it ain't the way. I don't even know if there is a way.

"You men don't have the right to stop the pickers," Mr. Phillips said. "If you do, you'll go to jail."

"They'll feed us in jail, anyhow," Clate Boggs said.

The group was moving up, forming behind Luther, their shotguns carried casually under their arms. "That's more'n you aiming to do."

"I'm not going to argue with you," Mr. Phillips said. His nostrils pinched in, and the downward sloping lines around his mouth bit deeper. He turned around. "Get those cotton-pickers to work."

Jeff looked up at the men on the pickers. One of them—Red Davis,—he had known when they were kids in grammar school. They sat there, high on the exposed seats, and did not move their hands. Their faces were white and strained. They seemed very small. Jeff knew how they felt. They were trapped, too.

Mr. Phillips walked toward the pickers, authority in his movements, and looked up at the drivers. "Get those machines moving," he said. "Do you think you were hired to sit around here doing nothing?"

"You start them machines, we gonna start shooting," Luther said. His voice drawled the words slowly, menacingly.

The drivers looked at the smooth, determined face of the man below them. Red Davis moved his gloved hand slowly toward a lever, grasped it, pulled it back. The picker moved forward toward the ends of the rows. He slowed it and guided it carefully into position.

Jeff watched the machine's steel-wire fingers magically whisk cotton from the first few stalks. They plucked it faster than human hands could move. The sickness moved within him, stronger now. No one stirred as the machine picked rapidly over a few more feet of rows. They were frozen into tableau in the hot, bright sunshine.

Luther lifted his gun. He put it to his shoulder and pulled the trigger. The shot bellowed into the dead silence. He fired just over Red's head. Red jerked the machine to a stop and dived off the seat into the cotton rows. The mechanical fingers



slowed, and the idling motor pulsed the silence full of low sound.

"The next one moves gonna be shot at, not over," Luther said. Jeff could hear his slow, rasping breath, almost like a sob of anger. A white line hardened around Mr. Phillips' lips. His face was covered with glistening sweat.

"Get back up there," he said to Red. "Get that thing going."

Red stood by the wheel, motionless. He did not shake his head or say a word. Mr. Phillips stared at him for a moment. He walked to his car and opened the door, leaving Mr. Gregory standing alone in the yard.

"I'll be back," he said. "This cotton is going to be picked today."

He wheeled the car out of the yard. The heavy body bounced smoothly as the car picked up speed. Luther spat on the ground and wiped the back of his hand over his mouth.

"We got him whupped," he said. He swaggered a little as he came back to the shade of the porch. His eyes slid over Jeff for a moment.

"He's gonna be back," Jeff said. "With a carload of law."

"I reckon by God we can beat the law, too," Luther said.

The men were still untalkative. They moved back into the shade of the porch and waited. The other driver got down from his machine and talked to Red. Mr. Gregory still stood alone in the dust of the yard. Time crept slowly, interminably, but the sun had moved the shadow of the store only a few inches when Mr. Phillips came back. Behind him were two cars packed with men. The wicked glint of gun-barrels poked out of the windows.

They skidded to a stop and piled out of the cars. The men came across the yard and fanned out in front of the cotton-pickers, Sheriff Rensfrow in the lead. They carried ugly, shortbarreled shotguns.

Jeff looked at Luther. Luther's face was white and drawn. A clammy sweat clung to his hands, and he rubbed them on

his thighs. The men drew closer together against the threat of the guns, watching Mr. Phillips.

Mr. Phillips did not look at the men. He went over to the drivers and spoke to them. The drivers nodded and climbed to their seats. The low mutter of the picker motors droned into the silence in a heightening whine. The second picker swung around over a set of rows. They started moving down the field, side by side.

Jeff saw Luther's face twist and harden. The deputies' crouched, their guns covering the tight little group of men. Luther's gun started coming up.

"Moats," Sheriff Renfrow said warningly, his voice stabbing into the thick silence. He moved his heavy gun toward Luther and his finger curled around the trigger.

Luther's face was ash-gray. There were lines in it that Jeff had never seen there before. Steadily he raised his gun to his shoulder. Jeff stood up, dropping his gun, and ran to him. He twisted the shotgun out of his hands. Luther clung to it for a moment, his eyes pleading with Jeff, but Jeff held on the gun.

"You goddam fool," he said. "Don't you know they dot<sup>10</sup> us?"

"I'm gonna stop 'em," Luther said. His voice sobbed out of his chest. He grabbed for the shotgun again. "I'm gonna stop the goddam sonsabitches."

"They'll shoot us down like dogs," Jeff said. "You ain't gonna do your family any good dead."

Luther walked blindly toward the store porch, his shoulders slumped. Jeff stood there alone, in front of the men. Dully, he watched the cotton-pickers moving into the rows. With a surge of anger, he raised his arm and slammed the shotgun to the ground.

Mr. Phillips' voice carried steady, remorseless anger. "You men have caused enough trouble," he said. "Get off this place. I don't want you or your families here tomorrow."

Jeff glared at him. His hands flexed and closed violent-

ly. He knew now that he was going. He shouldn't have stayed in the first place. He should have gone a long time ago.

"Come on," Sheriff Renfrow said. "You heard what Mr. Phillips said."

"Any man gets caught on the place after tomorrow noon gets arrested for trespassing," Mr. Phillips said. "I'm serving you notice right now."

The men still had their guns, but their hands hung loosely at their sides. Their faces were pinched, and the anger had gone out of their eyes, leaving them pale and tormented. Jeff looked at them once, quickly, and looked away again.

"You can't do that," Glenn Brothers said unconvincingly, "Where we gonna go?"

"You should have thought about that," Mr. Phillips said, "when you started coming out here with your guns."

Jeff couldn't stand there any longer. The men were moving now, breaking up the group. Jeff turned stiffly and walked away from them, and this time he knew he was going. Nothing could keep him from going. He heard footsteps behind him. Some of the men were following, taking long steps to keep up.

"We can all go together," Clate Boggs said. "You got to help us, Jeff. You know how to handle these things."

Jeff walked faster trying to get away from them.

"Where we gonna go, Jeff?" Boggs said, almost trotting to keep up. Jeff had to lie to get rid of them. "I don't know," he said desperately. "I'll think of something. Go get your stuff on the wagons. I'll be back pretty soon."

"You sure?" Boggs said. "You sure you'll be back?"

"Goddam it, I said I'd be back, didn't I?" Jeff said.

"Let's go get ready," Luther said. "We can be ready by in the mornin', Jeff."

"Yeah," Jeff said. "You-all get ready."

And they had turned away and gone back to their weathered, sag-roofed houses. He had kept on going, walking

blindly in the dusty road, the words hammering in his mind. I got to get outa here.

He stepped off the pavement to let a car go by. He tried to take his mind away from the men, away from the pickers. He didn't want to think about them. I'll go to New Orleans, he said. Maybe Galveston later on or Mobile, but I'll go to New Orleans first. Why the hell did I ever come back here for, anyhow, is more than I can figure out.

He thought about Galveston. He had lived in a dingy yellow boarding-house. The streets were thronged with drunken, brawling men from the merchant ships. He lay on the thin, smelly mattress at nights dead tired from working in the shipyard, and always around him was the beat and throb of other people's lives. They drank and fought, and the thin walls brought every sound of them to his ears and it seemed he could smell their sweating flesh, that the house and the people were smothering close around him.

In the mornings, when he got up in the blackness of four o'clock to go to work, the fog, damp and clammy and musty with held-in odors, would be hiding everything from sight.

Then one morning the fog had been too much for him. He had thought about the sharp, hot sunlight of the cotton fields, the clean smell of mule-sweat and human bodies.

A knowledge he had forgotten came back to him, and he had to go home. He had started right then. Instead of going to the ship-yard, he had started home. He had never left again. He had thought about it, but he had never left again. Until now.

The picture of it came before him again and with it the sickness in his stomach.... The relief in their voices when he told them he would be back.... Funny how they always depended on him. He'd helped every one of them at one time or another. He had stayed up three nights in a row with Luther Moats's sick mule when it was about to die.

At a fork in the road he stopped uncertainly. I'll go back to Galveston, he decided abruptly. Hell, it doesn't make

any difference. Galveston. Lying there at night, tired to the bone. The people, strange, intent, unfriendly.

Standing there, looking at the two highways, something came to him that surely he had known before. He wondered why he hadn't thought of it. In Galveston, in all the other places he had been alone. It wasn't the fog or the work or the tiredness—it was the aloneness.

He didn't know how long he had been walking, but it was late. Around midnight, maybe later. It didn't matter. The thinking about the time went away from him. He thought about the morning he had stood wearily, a cup of muddy coffee in his hand, looking at Luther.

"That mule gonna be all right now," he said. "Leastways I think so."

He drank coffee, letting the warmth go through his cold, tired body. Luther had smiled at him and he had smiled back. They were tired and peaceful with the knowledge of a good thing between them.

"Goddam it to hell," Jeff said aloud. The uncertainty flowed away from him, and the sickness went out of his stomach. He crossed the highway and started back. It was a long way, but he could make it. Maybe he would meet them coming.

Headlights glared on him from behind, coming fast. The truck slowed down and stopped. "Want a lift, buddy?"<sup>12</sup> the driver said.

He climbed in and the truck pulled away. He relaxed on the bouncing seat, staring ahead into the fan of light.

It had been later than he thought, for dawn was coming when they came to the dirt road leading into the plantation. A procession of ramshackle wagons was just turning out on the highway. They were loaded with old bedsteads and upturned straight chairs and battered trunks. Hooked in the traces were runty, sharpribbed mules. Only the very old and the very young were riding. The rest, even the women and children, walked alongside the wagons, already

with the flat-footed pace of those who have a long way to go.

"This is where I get off," Jeff said. The truck stopped and he climbed down.

"Hey, here's Jeff," Luther yelled. "We got your stuff loaded, Jeff. We didn't know where you'd got off to."

"Thanks, Luke," Jeff said. "I been saunterin' around." They thronged around him, gladness in their faces.

"Where we gonna go?" Clate Boggs said.

They waited for him to speak. Jeff looked at Luther, a question in his eyes. Luther smiled and waited for him, too.

Jeff looked up the road. It went away from them, long and straight, and he could not see the end of it.

"I don't know," he said. "I don't know yet

But his words were not words of despair.

**Ben Field**

## THE GRASSHOPPER IS STIRRING

As you approach the prairies, you hear and read more about the grasshopper. A single grasshopper is not such a bad bug, but let millions of him mob together, his temperature rises, his color changes, and as he swarms through the land set for him by the drouth, nothing can stop him, absolutely nothing can stop him.

The prairie on a hot Sunday. Along the horizon wooden churches with steeples like probes<sup>1</sup> stuck into the empty sky. Grain elevators, looming over towns, stand stupidly like giant robots. This day of rest, rusty farmers are bailing water from muddy waterholes, are bunched around threshers spitting yellowish chaff and straw, are strewn into combines and reapers shearing through long acres of bitten wheat.

From early morning he has been shocking wheat. Head to head you put the sandy hunches, bound so they have hourglass shapes. His shirt is soaked, his hands grimy. The boss has forgotten to send him his lunch. It is late afternoon already. He stumbles through the stubble to the fence. A covered wagon creaks over the dusty road stuffed with the belongings of a poor farmer. A horse limps behind, hip-bones jutting. The hand turns around, his face simple and open as an ingersoll watch.

Sure, the farmers here are having a hell of a time with the hoppers and drought. The hoppers were so bad one day they bagged the sun and it was black as a bat till night. The farmers are talking of a big strike. They'd better start something before their hides are hanging on half the fences in the country. Hired men are getting a dollar and a quarter shocking. It hasn't rained for a month so you get a chance to make money every day, even Sunday. You might just as well work Sundays. You got no place to go when you're on the prairie.

He goes back to his shocks. Head together, head together. Under a sun like a bloated bloodsucker, he swims in sweat until it's far too dark to see his torn thumbs.

There are thousands of these men on the prairie, working for farmers next door to starvation themselves. Boss and help caught as if in a wild sea, the stronger clambering to the backs of the most downtrodden for a last suck of air. You see these migratory workers walking the tracks, riding freights; on roads, thumbing the air for a lift; lying in scant grass with feet red and swollen as if picked out of boiling pots. In the villages they loiter in shadows, dusty as if vomited out of thresher funnels, with big belts like the ones motorcyclists wear to strengthen their backs, dispossessed, less at home here than the flickertail and the hawk, watching fresh clean girls go by.

The hired man straightens himself for a moment. He waves a weary friendly hand. The grasshoppers fall back in a drizzle.

In spite of her being as busy as a fly in a dirty corner, she seems thankful for the break in her day's work. She lets the screen door clap behind her. Her face is sour-looking like old milk.

Thirty years' homesteading in this spot. It's a terrible hard fight to keep the home their own. She shades her eyes and looks out over the section of land and then at the machinery and buildings in the barnyard—drags, grain wagons,



sprayers, silo<sup>2</sup> like a broken swill barrel, sheds where some pigs are grunting. A half dozen chickens cheep halfheartedly in the heat.

The hired men are really better off in a way. They get seventy-five cents a day and meals and lodging. They don't have to wait for their pay. They want it right away. She doesn't blame them. But all these responsibilities. The hired men, coming first, with feed and pay. The cows that have got to be fed and milked. In thirty years of homesteading she's never had a day off, never really a single day off. She wouldn't mind it so much if they could hold on and call things their own. She blinks at the withered house and at a dry stalk in a flowerpot on the window.

They had to borrow money for seeding from the government. They're mighty sorry now. The crop is so mean, prices poor, that it wasn't worth it at all. They're poor fools, that's what they are. Taxes are high as that windmill but bring no water from the ground. They bought poison against the hoppers, but it didn't help a bit. They came just the same. And the harder you work—ain't it peculiar?—the less you get. You keep rolling like a stone that's started down hill, doing yourself no good and nobody else.

She stops her lifeless droning. She listens. Never heard of Ella Bloor. We talk to her of Bloor's work among the grain farmers, of the program of the United Farmer's League. She brightens up a little and takes an application card. Can we come again?

We turn to the road. Around us are heaps of manure like mounts and dugouts raised quickly up against the grasshopper.

This farm consists of a quarter section.<sup>3</sup> Nelson a Swede has been farming it since 1900. He takes us over the land. The wheat is so poor it won't yield more than two bushels to the acre. It'll probably score three or four, and he'll be lucky to get ten to fifteen cents a bushel. Will he thresh? He doesn't know what to do. Last year he cut it for feed. One of the horses died from the thistles. Doesn't know what

to do. May just as well give his team and farm to the only hired man he can pay and hide himself in a badger hole.

For a second the sky darkens. Nelson stiffens. It's only a cloud. Not grasshoppers. The sun comes out again like a redhot rivet head. Nelson's blue eyes flicker. "I want to go to town. Goddam it, I can't go to town at all. I go to town the policeman stops me in the car. I say, 'You know, Bill, how it is with us farmers. We ain't got the money for a license.' He says, 'You can't stay here without a license. You come again without a license and I'll stick you in the coop.'"

Nelson waves his first copy of *Producers' News*. He handles it like a crowbar to help shove him out of the hole in which millions like him are stuck. "You right. We got to fight," he cries. "We got to fight," he cries in his hard guttural way with a throat of sudden brass.

The colt is driven into the stable yard. The five of us squat in the sun. It's pretty hot. At moments you feel yourself twirling round like the stick in the paws of an Indian making fire.

The farmer is a handsome fellow, lean as a grassrake, tough as horsehide. He's been working a half section here since he was mustered out of the army in 1919. He's voted Farmer Labor, been an I.W.W.,<sup>5</sup> and knows that between Republicans and Democrats there's as much difference as between a jackass and a mule. He's sick and tired of organizations. There's the Farmer's Union, the last he'll ever join, advocating a strike. That'll do something.

He rolls a cigaret. Hat jammed down over his eyes, he says doggedly: "Now here I am running this farm. I can outwork any man I ever hired. Why the devil should he get as much as me? There was a fellow come from town for threshing. He bellyached and fooled around till my hands were dancing themselves sweaty to belt him square in the

nose. Yes, and he was asking fifty cents an hour. There's your honest workingman for you."

The stable door is open. The little colt pokes its head out and bolts through the yard. In the nearby range a bunch of horses, the broodmare among them. The hired man jumps up and drives the colt back.

The farmer puffs. "It ain't so simple as you guys think. They'll always be the lazybones. You're all wrong. I ain't got it twisted up. And I don't talk that way because I'm a rich farmer. My wheat's so poor I couldn't afford to cut. We'll have this strike. We'll hold what little grain we got for a dollar a bushel. We got to fix moratoriums on debts. I owe a feed bill of \$129. I can't pay it to save my neck. I won't too. That's as far as we got rope to go. You fellows'll never swing in your kind of government."

He chucks his butt away. "I've knocked around quite a bit. And here's my motto: everyman for himself and the devil pitchfork the hindmost."

In spite of his mulishness, he takes a *Daily Worker*. He'll read and see for himself what we're drumming for. He heaves up and helps chase the colt into the stable.

The Dahlfelds are cutting their wheat. Fred yanks at the levers of the binder. The tractor lurches. He yells to the boys at the wheel. He jumps off. Again something the matter with the canvas. He grins. If they had the money, they'd invest a few cents in new machinery. Their neighbors are still worse off. The cows of one of them are actually starving because grass is too thin. The girls have to stay with them all day in the pasture to see they don't break through the fences. At night they're locked up in the barn. Fred fixes the patched canvas. Off again cutting the tenfoot swath.

With Charles his older brother we go through a field of sage. Charles has been working for the Western Electric in Cicero. Lost his job and is back where he started with his

wife and two children. Fred had been working in Chicago in a printing shop, trying to rake a few dollars together to get into the university. They cut him until he too was driven back to the farm.

"We peek into the barn for a minute. Holes in the roof big enough to shove a leg through. Once it housed fourteen horses and was stocked with fat cows. The section of land has dwindled down to a quarter, and that's theirs no longer. Even the old barn belongs to the government.

On the east branch old Dahlfield is reaping with a four-horse team, one horse borrowed. He leans from his high seat to shake hands.

"Been making the rounds, boys? Seen the exsoldier? Doesn't know enough to spit tobacco over his chin. The kulaks and merchants in town have been puffing him up. He's still got a crumb in his gut and a rag on his back. Give him time, give him time. When he's starving, he'll come our way. They'll all come our way. Why in this whole township I don't believe there are more than three farmers can call the boots they wear their own. Few weeks ago we had a meeting of the Farmers' Union. The president said, 'Don't worry so much, go home and relax.' I piled into him like a bullsnake. 'If we hadn't be worrying all the time, we'd been long dead.' That faker! Well, we took the meeting over. Fred spoke for an hour. And do you know these farmers listened like they were tied. If we'd had a program of the United Farmers' League there, we could have turned the whole bunch Red. Only one of the kulaks came up to Fred after. 'You're lying. What do you know about Russia? Have you been there?' 'Well, have you?' said Fred."

Charles shakes his head. "That Farmers' Union won't ever even reach first base. Their kind of strike will hurt the unemployed in the towns. Milk, bread, eggs will get higher. The only way out is for farmers and workers to strike together. Farmers' Union, the devil! Don't we remember the dirty trick they played on us when we had to auction off most of our stock and machinery and they posted

signs they hadn't authorized us, members of the Union, to go into it? They wanted us to sit back and starve."

The old man tightens on his whip and then eases up a little. Charles fingers a spear of marcus<sup>6</sup> wheat. It breaks in his hands, it's so brittle. Around him thistles are thick but below a slew the grain looks good. In the distance a single house like a trechopper and other bent farmers with tractors and reapers.

Dahlfield says, "Here we have some of the richest land in the world, and yet we're a pack of beggars. Soon our only belongings a louse or two. And still you got to keep on working. It's pretty bad here summers as well as winters. Winter no feed for cows, wind blows from all directions, drifts eighteen twenty feet high and snow in the roads up to your neck. Once we couldn't get out into the fields until May 8 and then there was snow water in lots of places. Talk to some of these kulaks. They think that all is the fault of nature, and you can't buck up against nature. They're like the colored contractor. He hired a man for two and a half dollars. He himself got only two dollars. Someone pointed that out to him. He said, 'But I'se the boss.' These farmers will starve so long as they can hang on to a farm and lord it over a few pigs and a hired man they exploit. I thought I was on the right track when I was a socialist. You live and learn. Only direct action will put us on our feet. Only direct action."

We go back to the house for water. The drought's been so bad it's killing the grove around the house. On a shelf in the kitchen a stack of *Communists* and *New Masses*. Fred is a Y.C.L.<sup>7</sup> Charles was bothered over the Nergo question, but he's straightened it out and now feels happy he's going to vote Red the first time. He points to an item in the local paper—"Harvest is going forward slowly as the farmers are financially unable to handle what little crop there is. They have no money for twine, repairs, combining, or threshing. What they will do is a question. Those that have headers are heading the grain and stacking, some are

talking of cutting with a mower or raking, others to handle it like flax."

"But we know what we'll do," says Charles. "They don't dare mention how some farmers asked Washington for a dollar an acre to help with harvest. They were turned down flat."

We get into the Ford and drive down the road which is nothing but a dead furrow. Thousands of farmers like the Dahlfelds are beginning to find out that Communism is sweeter than water in a dry land, deeper rooted than the groves shading on endless prairies their hunched houses, stronger than all the poison bait in a shaken world. The grasshopper is stirring.



# IV





**Howard Fast**

## CLARKTON

*(Excerpts from the Novel)*

*Leopold and James* were Industrial Consultants, with offices on the thirty-second floor of the Empire State Building.<sup>1</sup> When Lowell had entered their reception room, at a quarter to three of the day before this, he had felt moderately disturbed, a state of mind not helped by the fact that their offices were decorated in the style he disliked most, a sort of machine-age modernism made of glass brick, badly used, fluted chrome, tasteless copper bas-reliefs, and laminated chairs.<sup>2</sup> The pale-blue carpet on the floor was at least an inch thick, and on an enormous glass coffee table were spread out copies of *Fortune*, *United States News*, and the *Wall Street Journal*.<sup>3</sup> He lit a cigarette and had smoked half of it before a stocky, middle-aged woman in low-heeled shoes ushered him into James's office. Here, the pale blue was carried into the drapes and into the wallpaper, a photographic panorama of Yellowstone Park<sup>4</sup> or some other part of the Rockies,<sup>5</sup> white-peaks and pine forests and sparkling lakes, printed in blues. James sat at a gray desk in front of an enormous window, the winter sunlight framing him in a vista of limitless and wonderful distance, sky and clouds. He was a very small, dapper man, birdlike in movement, who hopped around the desk, shook hands with Lowell,

pressed him into a chair, and then, contradicting the sum total of previous impressions, plunged almost harshly into the business that had brought them together. As he talked, he betrayed a vague, almost imperceptible foreign accent - one that Lowell could not place, that allied itself with no country, no area.

"I'm glad you came down to see me personally, Mr. Lowell," he said "These are delicate matters, and one deals with them delicately. One deals with them efficiently, but one deals with them delicately. They are necessary, but delicate." Every time he said *delicate*, his voice rasped like a file.

Lowell, who reacted morally so readily, felt neither like nor dislike, but rather a sense of amazement. Later, it occurred to him that he would have reacted in precisely the same fashion if a fine Irish setter he had once owned had opened its mouth and spoken to him. Distaste came afterward; now he was relieved that the man's face remained in the shadow all the time they talked.

"You come highly recommended," Lowell said.

The small man smiled and nodded; that was the only time he smiled.

"It's a new situation for me," Lowell said. "It seems enormously complicated to me. I suppose it's not complicated to you."

"I never consider anything to be simple."

"I don't know how much you know about me," Lowell said. "I suppose you looked me up. You have a reputation for being very thorough."

"In our business, you have to be very thorough. That is your only asset<sup>6</sup> when you come down to it. It is not an art, it is a method."

"I suppose so," Lowell said.

"Methodology is basic. You have the plant five years now?"

"About that," Lowell answered. "My father died in 1940. My father was an old-fashioned man; he did things him-

self. I don't pretend to understand him, but I don't think he would have required your services."

"You didn't get along with him?" James inquired.

"I got along with him," Lowell answered flatly. "I didn't like the business. I still don't. It wasn't necessary that I should like it. I was well enough off, independently. So was my wife."

"But now you feel an obligation, a sincere obligation—to your dead father, let us say?" There was no sentimentality in the small man's voice; he chose his words, spaced them, and the tone rasped like a rusty file.

"Let us *not* say!" Lowell snapped. "The war came, and things were needed." He did not add that he himself was not needed, that his halfhearted efforts to enlist could only have resulted in a desk at the Pentagon building,<sup>7</sup> as such efforts did for so many of his friends. "I am saddled<sup>8</sup> with a very large enterprise," Lowell explained carefully, "and I am in an unfamiliar situation. I thought all of that was explained to you. In such a situation, my father would have known exactly what to do; he was that sort of a man. I sought the advice of others, and they referred me to you."

The small man nodded seriously.

"Specifically, I want the property protected," Lowell went on. "I don't want the strike broken, you understand—?" He peered at James, realized with astonishment that he was afraid of the other, and forced himself to a deliberate, almost insolent action: "Put on the light, please," nodding at the lamp on James's desk. After just one long moment of silence, the small man lit up his features with a click of the switch, became commonplace, sharp-featured, shrewd. "You broke strikes in the 'thirties, as I understand it," Lowell continued smoothly. "These are not the 'thirties."

"I am aware of that."

They didn't like each other, and that was in the open now, and neither of them would forget it.

"I'll send two men up there—two very good men," James said. "The police will cooperate with them." Then he add-

ed, a studied afterthought: "Your father brought in three men to head up the force from Anaconda." He knew that Lowell didn't know, and he couldn't resist the impulse to squeeze the small triumph. "That was in 'thirty-two." Let Lowell wonder whether his father and this man had ever any dealings. "Jack Curzon—he's still chief of police, isn't he?"

"He is," Lowell said.

Soon after that, he finished what details remained and left.

\* \* \*

Curzon was waiting for the people from the plant when Lowell and Wilson came down to police headquarters, and he shook hands with each of them eagerly, telling Lowell, "I knew your father well, Mr. Lowell. A fine man—a really fine man, like you don't meet many of these days," and then led them into his office. He watched Gelb as they walked into Curzon's office, a big square room with high windows, ancient green lamps, and musty mahogany furniture, deciding that Gelb, with his iron-gray hair, his faultless brown worsted, handkerchief in pocket, his square shoulders and neatly trimmed mustache, looked far more the executive than either Wilson or himself; and he reflected that Wilson was not far wrong when he had predicted the confidence that Gelb could inspire.

Both Gelb and Frank Norman had been pleasantly different from what he had expected. Norman looked like a clean-cut undergraduate, short haircut, good posture, intelligent. His specialty was maintenance,<sup>9</sup> and now they had left him at the plant, to watch the operation of the maintenance crew, to acquaint himself with the various guards, and to get the general feeling of the place. Lowell had liked the genuine humility with which he asked questions and accepted information.

Now, as they seated themselves in Jack Curzon's office, Wilson asked the police chief, "Is Freddy Butier here?"

"I didn't know you wanted him here."

"You didn't know I wanted him," Wilson said. "We only got the whole damned plant tied up, but we want to spend the morning talking with you. We can talk about what a nice sunny day it is for this time of winter."

Curzon had been talked to by Wilson before, but he didn't like it in front of Gelb and Lowell, and he had a feeling that Wilson was putting on a performance for the benefit of Gelb. His lips tightened, but while he was trying to think of just the right thing to say to Wilson, something subtle enough to reestablish himself with the other and yet not make for open defiance of the plant manager, Gelb stepped into the gap and said:

"No reason why Jack can't get Butler over here now, while we wait, is there? I'm sure we have enough to talk about." He was better at first names than Wilson; and Curzon, who had been prepared to admire him, found himself liking him.

"It's not good for him to come here," Curzon said apologetically. "If someone sees him come in, he's got to have an excuse."

"Then suppose you give him an excuse," Wilson said.

Curzon picked up the phone. "Okay. If that's the way you want it, okay."

They only had to wait a few minutes before Butler appeared, for it turned out that the man Curzon sent after him ran into him on the street, only three blocks away. Lowell said almost nothing during that time, sitting there and listening to Gelb and Wilson and Curzon talk. The idea of Butler's working for Wilson in the fashion he did was not one that Lowell found palatable, but he accepted it in the same way he had accepted Wilson's insistence that he take measures to protect his property through Leopold and James.

Gelb was commenting on the fact that it was a very nice town. "A satisfying town to live in," he said. "I like a town this size. It has a healthy atmosphere."

"It's a good place to raise a family," Curzon said. He

told Gelb about something his little girl had done that morning, and Gelb laughed with just the right degree of appreciation, enough to satisfy Curzon yet restrained sufficiently to assure both Wilson and Lowell that he, Gelb, had measured the man. In all truth, Curzon was not hard to measure, a fact that made Lowell feel just a little sorry for him.

"And the place has quite a history, too," Wilson informed Gelb. "If you have a chance, you should go out and see the old blockhouse on North Hill. When Professor Adams was here, two years ago, he spoke at Rotary and emphasized the fact that in his opinion the old blockhouse is the finest piece of pre-colonial reconstruction in all Massachusetts. The project was financed by Mr. Lowell's father in 1928. There are two brass cannons over there that were brought all the way up from New Orleans.

Lowell felt relieved when an officer entered, shepherding Butler in front of him. He was surprised to see how much like an essentially decent person Butler looked and acted. The thin, redheaded man had a careworn, anxious face, but the only sign of nervousness he betrayed was a constant turning of his cap in his hands. After Curzon had seated him alongside the desk, Gelb rose, walked over, leaned against the desk, and smiled in a particularly reassuring way.

"This is nothing special and nothing to worry about, Butler," he said gently. "I'm new in town, and I wanted to ask some questions that's all." He had a bedside inflection, an innate gift of relaxing people.

"Sure, Mr. Gelb."

"We met before?"

"I seen you in Youngstown, but maybe I wouldn't have recognized you if I didn't know you was in town."

"How did you know?"

"It's all over town," Butler said, and Gelb, showing steel for the first time since Lowell had met him, snapped at Wilson:

"I thought this would be kept quiet!"

"So help me God, the only one who knew you were here was Mr. Lowell himself. I only told Curzon a few hours ago."

"That's right," Curzon said. "That's right, Mr. Gelb."

Gelb walked away from the desk, dropped into a chair, and asked Butler, his voice gentle again. "Where did it start?"

"I couldn't say, Mr. Gelb. Maybe somebody recognized you."

"Maybe," Gelb nodded. "Are people talking?"

"They're curious," Butler said.

Jack Curzon said, "I don't see where it hurts any if they're curious."

Smiling a little, Gelb said softly, "Suppose you had to tell me one thing and only one thing—I mean something I don't know—about this strike, Butler, what would it be?"

Butler shrugged and looked from face to face.

"One thing."

"Maybe I'd say that this new D.O., Mike Sawyer, drifted into town yesterday."

"D. O.?" Wilson asked.

"District organizer."

"For the union?"

"For the Communist Party," Butler said quietly.

Lowell watched Gelb, but there was no reaction, no change in his interested, considerate attitude. Listening to him speak, it was difficult to tell whether one question was more important than another.

"You say he's a 'new man'?"

"Only on the job a few weeks. Byron Rand had the job before. I hear they sent him down South."

"Why?"

"It could be a lot of things," Butler said. "But he was pretty good. It's tough down there, so they send out their good people."



"They go where they're sent?" Wilson asked.

"Mostly, they go where they're sent."

Gelb lit a cigarette and puffed on it for a while before he spoke to Butler again, "What do you know about Sawyer?"

"He's a quiet guy—don't talk much, listens. He's a veteran of this war and the Spanish War."

"Lincoln Battalion?"

"That's right."

"You have another one in town, haven't you?"

"Dr. Abbott."

"We'll hold him for a while," Gelb smiled, avoiding Lowell's eyes, making Lowell wonder how much this well-dressed, quiet-speaking man knew, how much he had known before he came to Clarkton, how much he had learned since. Then, almost as if he had read Lowell's thoughts, Gelb turned to him and said, with a note of sincere yet not unctuous diffidence in his voice:

"It's my profession, Mr. Lowell, and I've been at it a long time. I'm sure you're as well informed in yours." Lowell, for all of himself, had to smile. Curzon and Wilson exchanged glances. Gelb asked Butler:

"When you say district organizer, do you mean the entire district?"

"There are four states in the district. Sawyer's territory is western Massachusetts. I guess it would be more on the ball<sup>10</sup> to call him a section organizer. That's his real title, but we call him a D.O."

Tightening a little, just a little, just enough for it to be perceptible, allowing just the slightest edge of hardness to creep into his voice, Gelb asked:

"When did you join the party here in Clarkton, Butler?"

"A little less than six months ago."

"You seem well informed for such a short time."

"I keep my ears open," Butler said, the note of insolence in his voice just matching the note of hardness in

Gelb's. Gelb smiled at him, and once again the voice became gentle and inviting

"Ever in the party before?"

"In 'thirty-nine— in Ohio "

"Why?"

"I did a job "

"For United?"<sup>12</sup>

"No, for the government. They pay you like a scab and treat you like a slob."<sup>13</sup>

"I've found," Gelb said sympathetically, "that they generally mess things up. Management and organization don't mix with politics. And before that?"

"Before that?"

"I mean, you were in the party before that "

"In nineteen thirty-two," Butler said

"On a job then?"

"No," Butler said "I was broke and I hadn't worked in a year, and I hadn't eaten in three days "

"I see. Tell me, who is party organizer here in Clarkton?"

"Danny Ryan "

"Full-time?"<sup>14</sup>

"No, he's a dinker<sup>15</sup> at the plant. There's no full-time in Clarkton; it's not important enough, not big enough. Also, Ryan's vice-president of the local.<sup>16</sup> He divides the party work with Abbott's wife, Ruth, who is organizational secretary for the whole works "

"How big is the party here in Clarkton, Butler?"

"Forty-three people." And then he added, with what was almost a disarming smile, "Including myself "

Gelb had a little book out now, entering not notes but figures. The book was a tiny, expensive memo<sup>17</sup> in blue leather, delicately covered with a tracery of gold, and it added to that sense of fastidiousness which Gelb managed to maintain with no loss of masculinity.

"How are they organized?"

"In two branches," Butler said, reaffirming.

"There's a shop branch and a neighborhood branch," Butler continued. "I'm in the shop branch—we got twenty-six members. The rest are in the neighborhood, Abbott's branch."

"The shop branch people all work in the plant?"

Butler nodded.

"What about the neighborhood?"

"Abbott and his wife, Joe Santana—he's the barber—and his wife. Old Professor Revere and his son, the one who teaches up at Williams.<sup>19</sup> Goldstein, the lawyer, and his wife, and Milt Cooper, who just got out of the army—"

"Never mind cataloguing the rest," Gelb said. And then, turning to Wilson, "You have a complete list, haven't you?"

Wilson nodded. "How come you know the other branch so well?" Gelb asked Butler.

"The two branches hold joint meetings once a month. Since the strike began, they've been holding joint meetings almost every three days—they had two meetings already. Anything at all that comes up, Ryan brings to Ruth Abbott."

"Where do the branches meet, Butler?"

"The neighborhood branch meets at the Abbott house—or in Santana's flat in back of his barber shop. The other branch meets around, at Ryan's house or at somebody else's."

"How does the shop branch fit into the strike?"

"Strictly with double-talk.<sup>20</sup> Don't misunderstand me. This strike couldn't have been pulled anyway like the way it's been pulled without them. But they're in it for what they can get for their god-damned party."

"How?" Gelb said, almost in a whisper.

"Well, Ryan makes a big pitch<sup>21</sup> to the comrades about political education, letting the workers know that a strike ain't the end-all,<sup>22</sup> teaching them that they got to learn how to take political action. We got figure out how to bring socialism to the workers. Bring them into the party. Teach them unity. Mass picketing and all that crap,<sup>23</sup> but Ryan

don't leave himself open. Hands off the union, he tells them. Keep hands off the union."

• "But they don't," Gelb smiled.

• "What do you think? There are three of the comrades on the strike committee. They run the soup kitchens." They volunteer for picket captains, which is no sleighride<sup>25</sup> because you got to show, no matter how the weather breaks. It's their own goddam little strike—but they're keeping hands off, all right, just running in food by the ton and pushing that rag of theirs, the *Daily Worker*, all over the place."

"Would any of them talk business?"

Little wrinkles formed at the corners of Butler's eyes and he looked at Gelb for a long, cool moment before he answered, "Why don't you try?"

"You're a smart cookie, Butler. You shouldn't be too smart. I don't like people who are too smart."

"I wouldn't be in this racket<sup>26</sup> if I was smart."

"This Danny Ryan," Gelb said. "Is it known around that he's a red?"

"How do you mean, known?"

"Does he admit that he holds a card?"

"He don't broadcast it. The only one in town who has enough guts to stand up and say what he is is Joe Santana. He used to have the church, and then he got the party like religion, and he keeps a stack of the Dean of Canterbury's books right there in his shop and pushes them onto anyone who's sucker enough to give him two bits for one."

"I was asking about Ryan," Gelb said.

"Some know about Ryan and some don't. When they decided to take the strike vote, at the local meeting, Bill Noska, the president, laid it into Ryan for being a commie.<sup>27</sup> Ryan never denied the charge, just kept asking them to look at his record and judge him by what he did, which is the line of crap they always pull, and then Joey Raye, a big nigger who talks like a Baptist preacher, got behind Ryan and swung it over to him.<sup>28</sup> That Ryan is one smart mick,<sup>29</sup> and he don't take a step if he don't know where he's

putting his foot. He's been carrying on this push for mass picketing, but he never pushes it too hard—he never pushes anything too hard if he sees it's running against him."

\* \* \*

Later, the three of them, Lowell and Gelb and Wilson, had lunch at the plant. Inclined to make small of what had gone on in Curzon's office, Lowell said he didn't see that twenty-six Communists in a shop that employed almost five thousand men and women could mean a great deal, one way or another.

"One rotten apple in a barrel isn't much, either," Gelb said. "One little touch of cancer isn't much, is it, Mr. Lowell?"

"It's still not against the law to be a Communist," Lowell protested.

"It will be, but the law is awful damned slow. This is a quiet town, Mr. Lowell. Your father never had any trouble here. But sure as God, you're going to have a pack of trouble if you don't stop it where it begins."

Uncertain of his ground, faced by the matter-of-fact directness of both Wilson and Gelb, Lowell sought for reason and facts to lay hands on.

"Yet the only thing you can put your finger on now," he said, "is that they want mass picketing and that they're bringing in food."

"They're the easiest people in the world to underestimate," Gelb said, "and that's a mistake I try very hard not to make. I have a reputation for success," he went on, "and I don't think I would have that reputation if I underestimated these people." He spaced his words with bites. "We make two mistakes, Mr. Lowell. We don't like these people, and we don't understand them. Costly mistakes, if you follow me. They're a very high type of people and that is something we must recognize. They are very skillful at organization. The purpose of mass picketing is not to make you aware of the workers, but to make the workers aware of

themselves. That's a hard concept for us to grasp, because we don't think like the workers, but they do. If you remember, in your father's time, the company union<sup>30</sup> worked smoothly—there was no trouble; then the CIO<sup>31</sup> came in, and the people in the town began to think of the plant in different terms." He apologized with, "It's not that I know more about the situation than you do, Mr. Lowell, but I can generalize knowledge from a hundred situations that are very similar. Your father laid down a pattern of paternal care, but when the CIO came, the workers began to demand. The appetite was there all the time, but here was a means of satisfying it, and either they devour you, or you make them understand that you are capable of imposing limitations upon their appetite. Now why are the Communists the key to this? Not because they call for revolution, not because they want to overthrow the government, not because they are destroying the family, the church, and everything else—these are old wives' tales for those who want to use them, and they only serve to confuse us—but because the Communists very cleverly make the workers aware of themselves and aware of what they can do when they get into motion. That would not be good for the Lowell Company and it would not be good for Clarkton."

"It's against our traditions," Wilson said. "It's against everything American."

"What do you propose to do, Gelb?" Lowell interrupted, tired already, wanting to get away and be through with this.

"There are various courses of action," Gelb said, "but I think we ought to put something in this that will act as a catalyst and settle it. Wilson tells me that it would be vastly to your advantage to have it over with quickly—but not by retreating. I think it would be wrong to retreat just now. There are certain things we can do. For example, a number of officers in the local are reasonably anti-Communist. There's a place for a wedge, depending upon how honest these officers are. We'll go ahead on that. But more than that,

I want to throw a monkey wrench<sup>32</sup> into it. Now Wilson tells me that the plant property extends all the way from the gates to Birch street."

"That's right," Lowell said.

"It's also marked against trespassing,"<sup>33</sup> Wilson said. "I spoke to Burton about that, and he says there's a solid legal basis for Mr. Gelb's proposal...."

\* \* \*

Hamilton Gelb sent Frank Norman to take a walk around the town. He had a certain respect and liking for Norman, but because he did not believe that sincerity and a sense of duty were sufficient substitutes for brains and objectivity, he had no particularly high hopes or plans for the boy. As a matter of fact, in those moments when Gelb was irritated with Frank Norman, he mentally classified him as a tout with the soul of a bookkeeper; but afterward he would feel sorry for such an attitude and ascribe it to his long-ago past, to a certain obstinate and foreign reluctance to recognize a clean-cut and forthright type of American. Yet Gelb could not help being annoyed at the way Norman reacted toward any deviation from the pattern, his almost frenetic resistance to change his attitude toward Negroes, Jews, foreigners, and anything else he considered subversive. Gelb had told Norman, when they first began to work together, "You must get certain things out of your head. You must beat it out of your head that these people are part of an international plot, controlled by Moscow, and you must get it out of your head that they are planning a revolution where they will seize the post offices and the state capitols<sup>34</sup> and take over. That is a kid's notion, all right for senators and congressmen, but not for the kind of work we do."

\* \* \*

Usually, an hour or two before noon, Danny Ryan would walk from the union headquarters on Oak Street over to Concord Way, and then up the main street to Birch, where

company property began. Westward, from Birch Street there were about four hundred yards of weed-grown meadow before you came to the gates of the Lowell Company, and this meadow stretched north to the creek and south to the main line of the railroad, the right-of-way being fenced there with a heavy nine-foot wire. This meadow was put to no better use than an occasional wandering cow or goat might improvise, and it was liberally dotted with half a century's accumulation of junk, metal too rusty even for scrap, rotten shacks, and just plain garbage. At one time, in 1928, the elder Lowell was going to put up a model company development,<sup>35</sup> but the crash cut into that when only the foundations were dug, and a line of these holes still gaped, muddy pits that bred mosquitoes in the summertime. The roads that led to the four plant gates cut through this meadow, and were marked PRIVATE NO TRESPASSING as was the meadow itself, with ancient, rain-dampened signs.

Sometimes, Danny would go up to the plant alone; sometimes with Bill Noska or some other shop official, sometimes with Joey Raye. Today the big Negro was with him, and the two of them had just turned the corner onto the main street, when they met Father O'Malley, who grinned cheerfully, offered his hand first to Ryan and then to Raye, and then asked them where they were bound for on this fine winter's morning.

"Just thought we'd push over to the gates and look at things," Ryan said. "Joey here has got his crew building a mobile hot coffee and sinker canteen<sup>36</sup> out of an old Ford suburban the local bought, and he wants to case the gates and see what the old cow should carry."

"Mind if I walk along a 'bit?" Father O'Malley asked.

"Not at all," Raye said. Ryan didn't say anything, and Father O'Malley fell in alongside of him, kneading his ribs with an elbow and saying:

"I get under that thin Irish skin of yours, don't I, Ryan? You're asking yourself, what the devil will people say when they see you walking along with the priest? Is this a self-



out,<sup>37</sup> or what is it? That's a thin Irish skin and a misconception, Ryan. I haven't lost my flock to that extent yet."

"Nothing of the kind," Ryan answered. "The sidewalk's broad, and it's still free."

"You don't like me, do you, Ryan?" the priest chuckled.

"It ain't a question of like or dislike. You're on one side. I'm on the other. That's all."

"I'm on God's side, Ryan," Father O'Malley said.

"Well, you got to produce His mutual assistance pact<sup>38</sup> before you declare Him in," Ryan laughed.

"You don't believe in God, do you, Ryan?"

"When you put it in my hand and I see it, then I believe in it," Ryan grinned, noticing how many people they met along the street nodded and gave the best of the morning to the priest.

"The difference is that I like you, Ryan. I wouldn't if you believed only in what I could put in your hand."

"That's the way it is."

"When you call a man comrade," the priest said casually, "What do you believe in then?"

"Socialism."

"Without the brotherhood of man, Ryan? By God, then it's not worth much the way I see it."

"Sure you see it your way—you're a good man for your organization, Father, but I don't fall for the did-you-stop-beating-your-wife line. You had a monopoly, so as to speak, of the brotherhood of man these past couple of thousand years, and what in hell's name did you make of it! Fifty million dead in the past ten years—if that's brotherhood, keep it!"

"You really broke with the church, didn't you, Ryan?" the priest said, unperturbed. "When an Irishman breaks, he breaks. But how long can you live with even the specter of damnation eternal?"

"I get along."

"Sure you do. That's what I want to put my finger on. You say you don't believe in God. You say you don't believe

in the brotherhood of man. You say you don't believe in salvation through Jesus Christ. Yet you're willing to die for what you believe in."

"I'd rather live for it."

"What do you believe in?"

"If that's a straight question," Ryan said, looking up at the priest, "I'll try a straight answer."

"It's a straight question."

"Okay—I believe in a time when man will stop exploiting his fellow man. That sums it up. If you want a book to read about it, I can give you one."

"I read a little Marxism, Ryan—not a lot. It's pretty tough reading, if you ask me. But I read some. You want me to accept the fact that all evil on earth comes because one man gives a job to another. I can't accept that."

"You make it awful damned simple," Ryan said.

"So do you," the priest smiled. "But when I look at the Soviet Union, it isn't simple, is it? It's mighty complicated, it seems to me. And you still haven't told me what you believe in that makes you willing to die for it."

"It takes a lot of telling," Ryan sighed.

"I have time."

"I haven't—not now."

"Whenever you have, Ryan, let's sit down and talk about it. I've grappled with bad men and won, so it seems to me I ought to have a fighting chance with a good one."

"What makes you think I'm a good one?" Ryan grinned.

"The fact that you're willing to die for what you believe in."

"That's a presumption, Father. And suppose I was—so were the Nazis, and they did."

"They never deluded themselves with the notion that they were making a better world. It was a black day for the church when they came into power."

"I never noticed the church making any show of stopping them."

"It's not the duty of the church, Ryan, to take sides with one part of her flock against the other. You never heard me preach a sermon in support of Lowell."

"No—and did you preach one in support of the strike? Did you ever tell your flock how to raise five kids healthy on beans three times a day?"

"No, I don't know that I did," Father O'Malley said good-naturedly.

"It's a funny thing," Ryan told him, "but whenever we get to talking, Father, it gets up in the sky. I don't live there. You want to talk about this earth and these United States—hell, I'll be glad to. We'll talk about the Negroes they're lynching, the fact that a million vets<sup>39</sup> got no place to live, the twenty-three miners who were killed in the last explosion, and the Greeks who are being murdered because they like freedom. There's a hell of a lot for us to talk about."

"There is that," Father O'Malley said.

Afterward, when they came to the edge of the Meadow, Joey Raye said to Ryan, "That's one smart priest, and don't you kid yourself, Danny. You ain't going to sell him no bill of goods."

"He won't sell me none either," Ryan laughed.

\* \* \*

Danny Ryan was talking to Maurice Renoir, the picket captain, and Joey Raye was helping two of the girls to stoke a salamander,<sup>40</sup> joshing them in his soft, easygoing way, when they noticed the approach of the little party from the plant. There was something in the even, determined manner of their walk that had its effect on everyone at the gate. The picket line stopped, and from an organized group they became a cluster of apprehensive and wary men and women. Their hearts beat faster; the chill of the winter day crept into them; the quick, formless threat of law drove them back on their heels and left them empty-handed.

Ryan started the picket line again. He said to Renoir,

"Let me do the talking, Murray." He kidded the girls and said, "Here comes the SS. Give them the arm."<sup>41</sup> "We'll belch in unison," someone said, and the tension was broken. Renoir began to sing, in his high voice, with a strange French accent, "There once was a union maid, who never was afraid. . . ." It was forced laughter, but they were able to laugh. Joey Raye whispered to Ryan:

"That's Ham Gelb, there in back. The joker in the sharp gray suit—with the mustache."

"Joey, you don't lose your temper," Ryan said. "You keep your mouth shut."

"He had Sam Brodsky shot through the head in Allentown in 'thirty-seven. He brought his torpedoes<sup>42</sup> in from New York, and one of them just walked up to Sam and asked him his name and then shot him. And Sam was like a brother to me when I was just a big, ignorant black bastard and a cropper—"<sup>43</sup>

"You shut up," Ryan said quickly. "You open that big mouth of yours, and sure as hell I'll kick the living day-lights out of you. You just keep that big mouth shut!"

The officers came through the gate, leaving Norman and Gelb and Wilson inside. One of the city men walked toward the picket line, prodding with his nightstick<sup>44</sup> and telling them to call it a day.<sup>45</sup> Three of the maintenance men followed him, grouped close behind him, backing him. The other officer demanded:

"Which one of you is Ryan?"

Ryan knew the officer who was shouldering the picket line. His name was Fanway, a big blond man who had come in from the outside with Curzon, and Ryan said to him, easily:

"Let's talk about this, Fanway. We don't want no trouble. You don't want no trouble."

The maintenance men had shouldered their way in now, and the picket line had stopped once again, the workers clumping up uncertainly. Renoir, who had a fiery temper,<sup>46</sup> kept his hands in his pockets and watched Ryan. The girls

were frightened, admittedly; the men were also frightened and tried not to show it.

"Are you Ryan?" the second officer demanded.

"That's right. What is this? We're in our rights."

"You're in company property too," Fanway said. "Company property starts out there on Birch Street, and you're just about four hundred yards outside the law. In other words, you're going to break up this picket line and pull it back there to the city streets."

"That's a laugh," Ryan said. "That's a laugh if I ever heard one."

"You got a big mouth, Ryan," the other officer told him. "You got one hell of a big mouth."

"Sure I have, and I'm going to shoot it off. What kind of crap are you trying to pull on us? These are the plant gates—they been the plant gates for twenty-five years. That's enough for common law,<sup>46</sup> isn't it? There's nobody used those lots out there except the cows, and the public road comes in."

"It's a company road," Fanway said. "You don't want no trouble, Ryan—all right. We don't want none either. We got warrants<sup>47</sup> for you and for Raye over there for trespass, and if you're going to force our hand, we got John Does<sup>48</sup> for the whole goddam lot of you. Now are you going to get that line out of here peaceful and back it up to the street, or do we have to run the whole lot of you in?"

Ryan could hear Raye breathing, short and hot. "Let's see the warrants," he said.

"Here they are, clean and legal and neat."

Raye said, "I told you, Danny, I know that sonovabitch from way back."

"I don't like that kind of talk," Fanway said.

"How come you got warrants for Raye and me?" Ryan wanted to know.

"I don't write the warrants," Fanway sighed. "What about it, Ryan?"

Ryan nodded and turned slowly to Renoir. "Take them

back to the street, Murray. Pull the other lines back too. Then get the story over to Noska and Max Goldstein. Tell Max to fix bail.<sup>49</sup>

\* \* \*

It gave Joe Santana a good feeling to see the people, even though they were slow in coming at first. A good many of them went to the early mass, and those didn't begin to assemble at the soup kitchens until well after eight o'clock. Others went to the local headquarters instead of to their soup kitchen, so that by half-past eight at least seven or eight hundred people were standing around waiting at the corner of Oak and Fourth. Joe himself went over to Sam Saropoles' place quite early, and helped Sam boil coffee and make toast—for which there were plenty of takers when mass broke. The soup kitchen filled up to capacity, with a steady interchange as well, and they ran out of bread, broke into their doughnuts<sup>50</sup> and cake, ran out of that, and then got out a case of zweiback<sup>51</sup> that had been donated by a Taunton grocer. "By God," Saropoles complained bitterly, "there's one thing about that O'Malley, he sure as hell gives them an appetite. You don't have the church on your neck one way, you got it in another." "It's the nervousness that gives them an appetite," Joe said. "You got to expect that. You got to expect them to eat us out of a week's rations to establish one mass picket line?"

\* \* \*

The sun rose with an icy and metallic glory, and the bells at the Protestant Episcopal church, which was all the way over eastward, on the other side of town, began to toll out the sweet notes of the Bells of Saint Mary's.<sup>52</sup> It was a strange and unusual Sunday morning for Clarkton, with so many people on the streets, so many clumps of them here and there, more people than it would have seemed that the town could hold, and through them and among them the townsfolk who did not work at the plant, and some that did too,

going to church in their Sunday clothes, and not a policeman in sight but the one radio car Jack Curzon had cruising slowly back and forth through the streets.

There were hundreds of children who had turned out to see the sight, and they were making a great holiday thing of it. A whole contingent of young workers who were veterans were got out in uniform, carrying their own flag and a big banner which said, *OK—if it takes more than Anzlo, Tarawa, and Normandy!*<sup>53</sup>

At a quarter to nine, Danny Ryan, driving Renoir's 1931 Ford Sedan, pulled up at Saropoles' kitchen, pushed his way in and told the Greek, "The whole thing's screwed up for the march up the street. We got more than a thousand at Oak and Fourth, so why don't you send your gang up there, and we'll start out from there instead, and give Curzon less of a chance to tear into us."

"I don't see any cops,"<sup>54</sup> Saropoles said. "I don't think they make a damn bit of trouble for us, Danny."

"Well, don't think too hard, Sam. There's sure as hell a lot of them up at the plant."

Meanwhile, Noska was handling the press at the union's executive offices. Young Jimmy Campbell was there from the Clarkton *Minuteman*, as well as two reporters from Worcester who had come in on the morning train, one from the *Times*, and the other the AP<sup>55</sup> man, both of them taking a chance on a telephone call Betty Sullivan, the local's promotion person,<sup>56</sup> had put through. David Broom, a local accountant who worked for two wire services on space rates,<sup>57</sup> was also there. The little office was crowded, and the reporters kept firing questions at Noska, a practice they believed, by scripture of film and book, to be a necessary one. Bill Noska said, again and again:

"Nothing's going to happen. It's an interference with our simple, legal right to picket. We intend to picket, that's all."

"But what about that crowd outside?"

"We have the right to assemble in mass," Noska said slowly and stubbornly, biting each word.

"What do you think of Tom Wilson's charge that the whole thing is being engineered by Communists?"

Still biting the words, Noska said, "If Tom Wilson thinks I ain't president of the union, or I run it crooked, or I'm pushed around by a lot of reds, and if he says that, then he's a dirty liar."

\* \* \*

Lowell awoke to reality and the world he lived in to find Tom Wilson pushing into the pew next to him, a red-faced, breathless Wilson, who whispered hoarsely:

"George, there's trouble. We had a blowup at the plant."

"Plant?"

"I got to talk to you outside, George."

"When it's over," Lowell said. "Don't be a damn fool!"

There was shushing, a rustle in the row ahead and the row behind. "George," Louis pleaded.

"I have to talk to you," Wilson whispered.

"It can wait."

"It can't wait. I tell you, there's hell to pay, George."

"I can't leave now. Don't be such a damn fool, Wilson. Can't you understand that I can't just get up and walk out of here now?"

"George, I tell you this is a life-and-death thing. Would I come into church like this?" Wilson pleaded. "I'm a church-going man myself. Would I come into church like this?" Wilson took out a handkerchief and wiped his red, perspiring face. He still wore his coat, and he kept kneading the crown of his hat, pushing it gradually out of shape, attacking it with all the fierce, nervous energy he could not express in speech. And meanwhile, the sermon went on, the deep, rising, falling cadence of sound. Lowell looked helplessly at his wife, then rose abruptly, pressing Wilson ahead of him, following the plant manager down the nave, through the big oak door, and then down a flight of steps to the men's room. There, in the spotless white-tile purity, which Lowell himself had installed through a princely gift of ten



thousand dollars for fund and repairs and improvements, his anger burst forth:

"Of all the stupid damn things, Tom, this tops everything!"

"Please—please, George. Please listen to me, George."

"I'm listening. Go ahead."

"We had trouble up at the plant. Two people are dead."

"What!"

"That's right, George." Wilson nodded miserably, leaning his heavy bulk against a sink. "That's right, George," he repeated.

"How? What happened? Who's dead—can't you talk?"

Wilson shook his head plaintively. "I haven't stopped, George. I been up half the night, and I just haven't stopped."

"Who's dead?"

"A fellow by the name of Jack Lamar—works at the plant, and the lawyer, Max Goldstein."

"And this happened at the plant? How, in God's name—"

"That's right. It happened at the plant, George." Lowell's world turned over and over.

"What happened?" Lowell demanded. "Just tell me what happened."

"There was nothing you could do about it, George, it just happened. They got together about two thousand of the workers and people from town and they marched up to the meadow. We knew they were going to do it, and Gelb had our men and Curzon's men there waiting. Gelb told them to stop short of the trespass signs, but they just kept on coming and pushing back our men, and then about halfway across the meadow some damn fool shoots off his gun and hell breaks loose and the guards went crazy, I guess. Two of Curzon's men were beat pretty badly and about twenty of the crowd were cut up and shot and—well, two of them died."

"What was Goldstein doing there?"

"He was one of the commies," Wilson said, his voice

strengthening. "He had no damn business there, George. That fat fool had no damn business there at all. George."

Lowell felt sick, tired and weak and outside of the pale of logic. He sat down on a white enamel stool, supporting his head with his hands, trying to understand what happened to him, to his wife, family, possessions, hopes, past and future and dreams when something like this took place. He asked Wilson weakly:

"Did you see Burton? What does he think? What is the legal side of this?"

"The first thing I did was to call Burton," Wilson nodded, gaining assurance from Lowell's collapse. "I talked to Burton myself on the phone. He says not to worry. He says there isn't a court in the country that would decide against us. I knew you'd be worried about that, and I pressed him. He said he'll stake his reputation on it. He said he was going to get through to the governor immediately and let him have the facts firsthand."

"I don't understand about Goldstein—"

"It happens," Wilson said. "You got to get a grip on yourself, George. Either we take the offensive and see this thing through, or it's going to backfire."<sup>8</sup>

"This other man?"

"Lamar's a k'nuck,<sup>59</sup> worked in the shipping loft. A dirty-tongued troublemaker—"

"Are any of the others . . . badly . . .?"

"No, no, not at all," Wilson assured him.

"Was it Gelb that—"

"You can't blame Gelb," Wilson said. "So help me, George, I saw the whole thing. Gelb wanted to handle it clean and neat, but those crazy bastards Curzon's got working for him, they just went crazy."

"What do we do now?" Lowell asked dully.

"Get it in hand. The way Gelb feels, now is the time to get it in hand and pull the loose ends together. That's one thing you don't want with something like this—loose ends."

"I can't talk to reporters," Lowell said hopelessly. "Tom,

I want you to see to that. I didn't even see the thing. I didn't know. My God, Tom, how in hell could you and Gelb let a thing like that happen? How in God's name?"

\* \* \*

With Frank Norman, fear and panic were now stronger than the momentary exultation that had led him shouting along with Curzon's men, until he went half crazy with the rout, the mob, and the blood on the ground. When he sat in Tom Wilson's office, two hours later, he presented a picture of dejection, such complete dejection that he made Gelb smile. Gelb had just come into the room, immaculate as ever, as neatly dressed, his mustache trimmed to a nicety, and the long, masculine creases in his cheeks wrapped around his square, handsome chin with direct and forceful determination. He presented that combination of debonair assurance and calm forthrightness that can be so vastly reassuring in almost any situation, and as he lit a cigar, he seemed to be examining the innermost crevices of Frank Norman's soul. For a long moment, he stared appraisingly at Norman; then he struck a match to his cigar, took several deep puffs, and walked over to the window. His back to Norman, he said:

"Well, they're at the gate again."

Norman joined him, and they both watched the seven or eight hundred workers in their circular march in front of the east gate.

"What are we going to do about it?" Norman asked uncertainly.

"Nothing right now. We'll hit them again—but when they've lost their edge. When they think they've won. The thing for you to do, son, is to go see that girl of yours and spend Sunday as it should be spent. Shake this place out of your bones. I hear they've got a place up in the hills. Get her to ride you up there. Breathe fresh air. And let me do the worrying."

"I just feel that we messed it up. Mr. Leopold had con-

fidence in me. I remember him telling me that he didn't expect people to make mistakes, and that the firm didn't forgive mistakes."

"Only God is that perfect," Gelb said reflectively; "not Leopold and James, by any means." Then he added, "And I sometimes wonder about God." He waved his cigar at the picket line. "I don't know that we made a mistake, Frank. The commies call this thing class warfare. That's something to remember. This is just a little bit of a skirmish—remember that *sitzkrieg*<sup>60</sup> they had in France, in 'thirty-nine and 'forty. A k'nuck and a Jew are dead—well, Jews have died before and so have k'nucks, and they will again, I suppose. This December is the end of a quiet year, and a little skirmish like this looks like a big thing. It isn't, Frank. There's a lot of sense in what the reds say, providing you have a point of view. I've said that before, and I'll say it again. The time will come when we'll have to squeeze them"—he crushed the cigar in his powerful fingers—"like this, and when that time comes, well, Leopold and James are realistic people. If there's any talking to do, let me do it. For the time being, I give the orders and you take them—understand?"

Norman nodded, and Gelb told him, "Go out and find that girl. How're your expenses?"

"Not bad," Norman answered, unable to resist the buoyant energy of the older man. "I have about twenty dollars left."

"Well, just call on me if you run short. For the time being, Lowell wants us to hang around. That doesn't disappoint you?"

"No, Sir. I like this town."

"Suppose we have dinner this evening. There's no need to worry about today. Nothing else is going to happen today."

"Yes, sir. Would seven o'clock at the hotel do?"

"Make it six-thirty. And good luck and good hunting."

\* \* \*

It began with Gelb, who stood a little in front of Lowell. Wilson and Norman stepped over to one side, and the shadows swallowed them. Curzon placed himself at the edge of the circle of light, snapping Ryan's head up with the back of his hand as Gelb spoke. To Lowell, the change that came over Curzon was extraordinary; the flabbiness of the man disappeared; his whole nature seemed to undergo a transformation, just as a surgeon, ordinary and run-of-the-mill<sup>61</sup> in everyday life, becomes an artist in an operating room.

"Hello, Ryan," Gelb said casually. "I been looking forward to meeting you."

"You don't want the dinge<sup>62</sup> too?" Curzon smiled.

"I just want Ryan. Ryan's my boy."

"Not the dinge?"

"Just Ryan—just Danny Ryan. He's my boy. I like Ryan. I respect him. All I hear in Clarkton is Danny Ryan; he's a big man in Clarkton."

"You're Gelb," Ryan said, smiling very thinly. "I like to see who I'm talking to."

"He likes to see who he's taking to," Curzon grinned. "He's my boy too. He likes to see who he's talking to."

"I see you, Curzon," Ryan said. "It ain't no sight for sore eyes."

"I never seen a mick who didn't talk too much. Go on talking, Ryan."

Gelb walked into the edge of the circle of light and stood there, staring seriously at Ryan. Then he asked him, "Are you an honest man, Ryan?"

"I pinched pennies from my old lady. That's how I got my start."

"I ask a straight question, Ryan, I like a straight answer. If you're too proud to make an odd buck,<sup>63</sup> we'll do it another way."

"I'm proud. The Ryans were kings in the old country."<sup>64</sup>

"He's got a sense of humor," Curzon said.

"I have seen reds that couldn't be bought," Gelb said slowly. "Are you one?"

"I'm in this racket for what I get out of it. Moscow pays a grand<sup>65</sup> a week. Can you do better?"

"You're a snotnose," Gelb said deliberately. "You're like all the rest of them. You don't have to sing for us, Ryan. Everything there is to know about you and that nigger we picked up, we know. Everything—understand me? Now you can play ball or we can let Curzon here work over you a little."

"What kind of ball?"

"I've got a statement here, just a short statement describing how you and your buddies fomented the strike in order to advance the political ends of your party. It names some names. The statement will not be used unless it's necessary to use it, and I don't foresee any necessity. You have my word for that. In any case, the strike will be over tomorrow. Mr. Lowell has agreed to meet the union's demands tomorrow, and that's the end of it. But I want this statement signed by you. Mr. Lowell is willing to pay two thousand dollars for it."

"It's cheap at the price," Ryan said. "But for a working stiff, two grand is plenty."

"You don't have to make a speech," Gelb told him quietly, the edge that Lowell had noted once before coming into his voice. "You just say yes or no, Ryan. That's all I want—yes or no."

"The trouble is, Gelb, that you're out of date. Lowell don't know that. You're from 'thirty-seven, but this ain't 'thirty-seven. You don't move in and smash strikes today. You don't blow and expect labor to fall over. Everything changes except bastards like you, Gelb—"

Curzon hit him in the face, a sound like an apple dropping from a tree onto a hard board, and he went over backward, chair and all. To Lowell, it appeared to happen very, very slowly, and he couldn't understand why Ryan had not seen the blow coming, had not attempted to get out of its way. The hot, bitter acid in Lowell's stomach rose, and he moved back, quite apart from his own volition, until his

shoulders pressed against the door. Being a sensitive man, he felt the blow; it stung him even after the two officers had picked up both the chair and Ryan, and set them in place. In terms of the essence of brutality, it was quite the most horrible thing Lowell had ever seen; and though he was forty-four years old, and though he had traveled through most of the nations of Europe and seen a good deal beside that, he could recall nothing that was like this.

Ryan shook his head and tried to spit out a broken tooth that dangled by shreds of flesh. His upper lip was broken and swelling already, and a thin black stream of blood trickled from the corner of his mouth.

"He's my boy," Gelb said.

"He's my boy, too," Curzon grinned. "He's got guts. All micks got guts. Nothing he likes better than a little scrap."

"Maybe he wants peace and comfort," Gelb said. "He's a family man. Five children. A family man gets tired of scrapping. He wants peace and comfort. He thinks I'm out of date—but it could be that he is out of date. You hurt his face too much," he said to Curzon. "The little man is not pretty to begin with, so why do you want to hurt his face so much, Jack?"

"No more on the face," Curzon smiled.

"No more." His tone toward Ryan was conciliatory and wheedling. "How about it, Danny? I don't like this any better than you do."

"To hell with you!" Ryan said.

Curzon hit him in the stomach this time, and again it seemed to Lowell that the police captain moved with agonizing slowness—even though all of Curzon's body arched with the blow, lifting Ryan again, hurling him and the chair outside the cone of light into the darkness. And both sounds were delayed, the sound of the fist in Ryan's stomach, the smack and the burst of breath driven out, and then the crash of man and chair rolling over on the floor.

The two officers brought back Ryan and the chair. They put Ryan in the chair, but he hung over, his hands grasping

his stomach. The tooth hung out of his open mouth, dangling on one slender strand of pink gum.

"He's a daisy," Gelb said. "He's cute. He's a daisy."

"He's my boy," smiled Curzon. "The shine<sup>66</sup> is bigger, but he's my boy."

Over his shoulder, Gelb said, "You note this, Frank. He's a person of principle. I offer him two thousand dollars, but he's proud. Very proud people, Communists. They know all the answers, but when I ask him a calm, polite question, he only says, the hell with it. That's a lot of pride for cheap shanty Irish."

"He loves to be beat," Curzon chuckled. "He loves to take it."

"But he could stop taking it. He could get it into his head that when the mill opens, he and the comrades are going to be out of jobs. He could get it into his head that he has no future in Clarkton. He could get it into his head that there's no future in his whole filthy racket. He could get it into his head and he could make it pay, too."

Ryan was breathing again. He shook the tooth loose, watching it as it fell to his knee and then slid down on the floor.

"You have been a hero," Gelb sighed. "I want to do business, Ryan. I deal in dollars and cents. What about it?" His voice changed again, "You have a wife and kids. Where does it get you, Ryan? Take it easy for a while. You got one life to live, and you screw it all to the devil. Take it easy. Maybe we can work out something with Mr. Lowell where you can really take it easy. He wants to be fair. I want to be fair. There's no need for all this kind of thing, no need at all. Whatever you think of me, Ryan, whatever you heard, I can tell you truthfully that I hate brutality. I deplore the need for it. I admire efficiency. That's why I admire you people. I am not taken in by what fools say about you. I sincerely admire you. That's why I make it two thousand dollars; that's why I set a fair price."

"You dirty son of a bitch," Ryan said to him.



This time Curzon hit him in the groin, the same kind of blow as before, sharp and sweeping, with his whole body behind it.

\* \* \*

Lowell met Noska for the first time at Tom Wilson's house, for lunch that day. By then, Lowell felt better. It surprised him, how quickly he could forget the incident at the police station, yet in retrospect the beating was a lamplit dream, utterly without reference or reality. Along with this he had a sense of conclusion, of impending culmination. The fact that the thing would be over soon made it easier to justify.

He watched Bill Noska during lunch. The man, he surmised, was a Slav of some sort, a Pole or a Lithuanian or a Czech. More than six feet tall, broad, solid, handsome too in a way, he appeared to possess all the qualifications for a leader. Lowell could understand how people would trust him and follow him. Lowell's curiosity had a tourist's quality to it; these people had worked for him, but he had never known them, never spoken to any of them. Until lately, the word *worker* had been an abstraction to him, and like most people of his class, his relationship with the common people, in quotes, was via cab-drivers, barbers, hotel employees, ship's help—and intermittently with all those others whose purpose in life was to satisfy this or that particular demand of his. Even his association with the plant during the past five years—in comparison with the present situation—was a most casual one. Florida and Arizona had been available during the war, as were the Berkshires.<sup>67</sup> He could recall no instance during his time in Clarkton when he had actually spoken to a worker, other than a word or two with an office employee. Not that he would have reacted badly to the idea of sitting down to lunch with Bill Noska; it was simply one of those things so unlikely that in the normal course of events it did not happen. Now that it had happened, he found Noska most human, clear in his ideas, and with no sug-

gestion of that servility which Lowell had seen displayed so consistently by workers who served him and his friends. When the meal was over and Wilson had passed around the cigars, Noska lit his with no trace of self-consciousness, saying to Lowell:

"I want you to understand, Mr. Lowell, I came here because Wilson said it was a chance to get together about things. I don't like a strike any better than you do, but I can't act without the executive committee of the local. All I can do is listen."

"That's all we expect you to do," Lowell said.

"You're a family man, aren't you Bill?" Wilson wanted to know. "You don't mind my calling you Bill?"

"I been called worse," Noska smiled. "I got a family—two kids."

"Church?"

"As much as the next guy," Noska said.

Gelb said, "We're not just beating around the bush,<sup>68</sup> Bill. You've been in strikes before. You know it's no picnic for anyone concerned."

"I said that."

"We want to get together and settle."

"It sure as hell didn't look like that this morning," Noska said.

"Maybe I was a little hasty about pushing back that picket line. Mr. Lowell thought so, and I'm inclined to agree with him now. But if we can settle this business, a picket line becomes inconsequential."

"I'm pretty sincere about that, Noska," Lowell added. "I want to wind this thing up as much as anyone else."

"I can only listen. I don't make the decisions."

"You swing some weight," Wilson smiled. "I'm a pretty good judge of men, and I know a man who swings his weight when I see one. And I don't pull any bluffs,<sup>69</sup> Bill—I'm a pretty honest man, and I like to dig right into a thing in the good old American way. That might disqualify me for diplomacy, but I never figured a down-to-earth American

made a diplomat the way these foreigners do. If you ask me, we waste too much time with this diplomatic double-talk<sup>70</sup> instead of getting right in there and saying just what we mean. So here's what I mean—in plain American, there's only one outfit that stands to win anything out of this strike. That's the commies."

Noska drew on his cigar and watched the smoke. Finally, he said, "They don't run things."

"I'm not implying that they run your union. You don't strike me as the kind of man who lets himself be pushed around by a lot of half-baked wild-hairs who ought to be sent back where they belong. I'm just saying they're the only ones who stand to gain anything out of this."

"I don't see that," Noska said slowly. "Maybe they're out to get the gravy, and I guess when you come down to it, I don't like that outfit any better than you do. But I don't see it."

"This is my first strike," Lowell said. "Believe me, Noska, as strange as it may sound, I'm the most disinterested party here, the most objective, I think. From where I stand, the longer you remain out, the more it hurts you. I can stand it. If necessary, I can close down the plant entirely. But what do you stand to gain? Would any pay raise make up for the weeks you are out?"

"From the reds' point of view, it's something else," Gelb put in. "I know those boys from way back.<sup>71</sup> Their main interest is to grow. They want to take over, don't they? All right, strikes are meat for them. Unemployment. Bad times. To hell with the union! To hell with the workers! They're out for themselves. Any strike is their baby. I haven't been there, but I'll lay you ten to one that right at this minute they're at your union headquarters selling the *Daily Worker*? Did I call it? Am I right?"...

"I don't vote strikes. I don't call them off."

"We understand that. We sat down to talk," Wilson said seriously, "and I don't think anything is lost when grown

men sit down and talk things over. That's the American way."

"A frank exchange of opinion," Gelb said, "is the well-spring of democracy. We can still afford it; I say, God help a country that gets to a condition where it can't."

So firm was the man's voice, so forthright, so complete was the ring of truth, the querulous note of anxiety, the high pitch of indignation and conviction, that Lowell, in spite of himself, in spite of what had gone on the day before, found himself being carried away. The very triteness of Gelb's and Wilson's homilies and clichés<sup>72</sup> added to the effect, and the silent adoration of Frank Norman was like a correct and ingenious prop, added casually at the last moment, yet becoming the central factor of cohesion and effect.

"I think of this little part of New England, Gelb continued, softly, the hard edges of him melting, a note of meditation clinging to his voice. "I think of the sufferings, the blood and sweat and tears of generations who made this peaceful land. I think of the Pilgrims<sup>73</sup> and the traditions of the Pilgrims and the banner of freedom they raised, for our children to inherit, and then I think of this dirty red scum, like a blot"—Gelb took a thick package of new bills out of his pocket and laid it on the table—"across the fair face of this free land." Noska's eyes fixed on the bills,<sup>74</sup> and then swung up, moving from face to face, hanging on each for an instant, then back and fixing on Gelb. Gelb replaced the bills in his breast pocket.

"I guess I got to go," Noska said.

\* \* \*

It was quite late when Wilson came with Butler, and Gelb arrived a few minutes later. Lowell was drunk enough not to mind their being here, drunk enough to have the rough edges smoothed down, and he took them into the library with an almost courtly and old-country grace. He gravely mixed drinks for them, revealing the liquor he had consumed only by the deliberate drag of his motions. He was

drunk, but not too drunk to walk, to talk, to sit down and listen to Gelb say, "You have all our apologies, Mr. Lowell. It's not simply that Butler here has a case of nerves—I don't want any aspect of this developing apart from you. I think it's a curse of our system that people like yourself—and I say this with the deepest respect—withdraw themselves from an active participation."

"You don't have to apologize," Lowell said, and then continued gravely, "I would be laggard indeed if this old New England soil had no call upon me."

"I want to get out of town tonight," Butler said suddenly.

"We won't take up too much of your time," Gelb said, ignoring Butler.

"The man's afraid," Lowell smiled. "Thoreau<sup>75</sup> said of fear that it comes from the soul, not from without. Who can do me harm, if my cause is a righteous cause?"

Gelb and Wilson exchanged glances. Lowell went on, with the same grave courtliness, "Surely, Mr. Gelb is capable of seeing that no harm comes to you. And if you wish to leave, I am certain you will not find us so ungrateful as to keep you here."

Just a trace of a smile, across Gelb's lips so quickly that Lowell could hardly be certain it was there. Butler was staring at him. "I want you to repeat to Mr. Lowell what you said to me about the meeting," Gelb told Butler, explaining to Lowell, "This was a meeting that took place about half-past seven tonight, all the officers of the local, the strike committee, shop stewards, kitchen captains, picket captains—about one hundred and twenty people all told. That damfool judge let Ryan out on bail, and he stood up and told them the whole story. Tell it your way, Butler."

"He spoke for about a half-hour," Butler said. "Ryan's a good speaker. You must have given him an awful going-over,<sup>76</sup> from the way it sounded. Then the nigger spoke. The nigger said Curzon tried to kill him, and that didn't sit so good. I think it was a mistake to go after the nigger like

that," Butler smiled, his first smile that evening, short and directed at Gelb, as if to say, "To hell with you. You loused it up," and Gelb told him:

"We're not asking what you think."

"It's just that we been having a lot of trouble with the shines in the local," Butler went on. "The k'nucks don't like the shines and neither do the micks. But this Joey Raye had them all pulling with him, and that's why I think it was a mistake."

"We're not interested, Mr. Butler, in your thoughts, however lucid and grandiose they may be," Lowell said politely, not looking at Butler, but at the bottom of his glass of Scotch, the slip of ice dissolving, the misshapen hands, all fluid and restless in the motion of the drink. "Nor are we interested in opinion, even when substantiated by so variegated an experience as yours. We are interested in the fact, which Aristotle terms the sublime holy which dwelleth in all oracles."

There was a long moment of silence, until Gelb said, "Go on, Butler."

"Ryan called for mass picketing. He said that his idea was to turn out maybe two thousand, maybe more, tomorrow morning, as soon as dawn breaks and push the whole lot of them up against the Birch Street gate. He figured them to report in at the soup kitchens and the union hall, and then march straight up Concord Way to the plant. Someone from the hall yelled out, 'What about Jack Curzon if he tries to stop us?', and Ryan said that Jack Curzon and all the other pimps<sup>77</sup> infecting the town could go down on a rubber duck,<sup>78</sup> but if you got two thousand people marching, there wasn't anything short of hell itself going to stop them." Butler said it with satisfaction. His thin, toil-worn face wrapped around the words, and he delivered them to Gelb, who remarked quietly:

"He said that, did he?"

"That's right."

"And what did Noska say?" Gelb asked.

"Not much. He wanted to know what about the next day and the day after that, and how long did they suppose they could turn out a picket line that size? Ryan said he had seen it done for ninety-two days, but he didn't think this one would run that long. On that he got a big hand,"<sup>79</sup> and then Larry Cooney got up from the floor and asked Noska, "Why didn't he just resign and write over the leadership to the Communist Party?"

"What did Noska say?" Gelb asked, very quietly.

"He said that when the time came when he thought he couldn't run the union any more, he'd tell them about it—and if Cooney wanted to make anything of that, Noska would see him later."

"Didn't Cooney get any support?" Wilson asked.

"A little—not much, just a little. You look what a smart hand this Ryan and this Joey Raye are playing. They don't move a step without having everyone in that damn local with them. They wait until a thing sinks in, and then they give that it comes from them. That's a smart hand." He added after a moment, "But Noska ain't happy. They got him by the tail, and he ain't happy."

"Few people are happy," Lowell said surprisingly. "Very few people, Butler." Watching their faces, he noticed the reaction; they considered him drunk. With slow, dragging thoughts, he surveyed and considered them, the shameful trio, a renegade, a brute, and a fool, and his superiority mounted on almost feather-like wings. So, he thought fancifully, must the patrician of ancient Rome have felt, with the barbarian and the plebeian louts to do his will, knowing that his will must be done, yet despising the tools. How clearly he saw them! And with what omniscience he understood them! They considered him drunk—and perhaps he was just a little tight, the warm looseness that permits thought to flow like water instead of like sluggish oil. He saw Wilson starting to rise, and he shook his head and waved a hand and said:

"No—I prefer to hear the rest, Tom. Allow Mr. Butler.

to continue." And to Butler, "My apologies for interrupting you."

Almost gritting his teeth, Gelb said, "Then they're going out tomorrow, Butler? Is that right?"

"That's right."

"And where does the party stand?"

"We had a meeting afterward in Joe Santana's house."

"Both branches?"

"Both. That's why I want to get out of here. They know there's a stool inside.<sup>80</sup> How long do you think it's going to be before someone puts the finger on me?"

"Turning yellow?"<sup>81</sup> Gelb asked softly.

"I take care of my skin—nobody else does."

"What did the party decide?"

"They're turning out with the big line—almost all of them, except a few, like the old man, the professor. They're going to try to get as many outside people in the town to go along with them, but my guess is they won't get many. That's all. They talked a little about some food the party over in Hudson, New York, and up in Rutledge, Vermont, promised them, but mostly it was about the big line tomorrow." He sat there stiffly, ill at ease in Lowell's comfortable library, turning his cap round and round, a small, ordinary-looking man, who in appearance was neither vicious nor dangerous, the kind of man you see passing and then forget a moment later, a tired man. Lowell granted him a muddled pity; there, it seemed to Lowell, was man, man miserable and small and contemptible.

"I ought to get a bonus for this," Butler complained. "You offered Ryan money—you offered Noska two grand, and I work for peanuts."

"Did Noska say that?" Gelb snapped.

"Sure he said it."

"The son of a bitch," Gelb whispered.

"I work for peanuts," Butler went on. "I got to get out of here tonight. I got a family. How do you expect me to travel?"



"What do you want?" Wilson demanded.

"Five hundred."

"Give it to him," Lowell said wearily. "Give it to him and let him go. Give it to him and take him out of here. Take the stench of him out of here."

\* \* \*

Freddy Butler lived on Cherry Street and Third Avenue, which was two blocks east of Oak and about three blocks from the union headquarters. Butler had Wilson drop him on Second Avenue, on the other side of Concord Way. There were no words between them, and Butler, the five hundred dollars in his pocket, a rankling bitterness in his heart, thought to himself, "To hell with the bastards! To hell with them, the lice!" He felt cheated, lonely, and woeful, and the picture of rooting up his family at that hour of the night, listening to their complaints, having to substitute his will for rational argument, packing their few things, and going through the bitter cold to stand and wait for the milk train,<sup>82</sup> was not an inviting one. Now, as so often before, the idea came to him of leaving them stranded and hitting out on his own, and, as before, he toyed with it and rejected it. Once there would have been an element of excitement to drifting the road, the whoring from town to town, the right to pick up a job or drop one whenever he damn pleased. But youth was an essential to that and he was well into middle age; the spark and spring had gone out of him, and his family was the only security he knew. He sensed well enough that without them, he would funnel down to the bottom,<sup>83</sup> a loafer and a drag and a feeble, dirty bum. So he put his hands in his pockets, and walked through the sleeping town, through the cold, silent, moonlit night, harking to the far-off and lonely call of a train, the somber barking of some farmer's dog, and meanwhile rehearsing what he would say to his wife.

He was just rounding the corner of Third Avenue, when a soft voice out of nowhere or anywhere said, "Hello,

Freddy. It's mighty late for a family man to be coming home..." a voice without malice or threat, just soft and gentle.

He stopped short, fear a heartless knife inside of him, himself oppressed with the hopelessness of a man already dead, killed though conscious, full of that last and dreadful petulance. All the time, as he thought to himself, it was for peanuts, not the way some sold their souls, the devil a smiling gentleman, weighted down with gold, not the way the big trade-union leaders sold out, for comfortable and lasting endowments, not the way the intellectuals sold themselves, for a gold-plated seat of honor in a plush-lined sewer, but like a working stiff—for peanuts, the pure and simple of it, peanuts. He might have run, leaped away, cried out, but it was coming all these years and it was no use to run.

"Who is it?" he asked.

It was Joey Raye, a monstrous large black man, who stepped out of the doorway of a store where he had been standing to shield himself from the cut of the wind, and who showed his white teeth under his puffed, bruised lips, and said, "Hello, Freddy." With his hands in the pockets of a blue pea-jacket, with a woolen cap perched on the back of his head, with the soft drawl of his rich voice, he restored familiarity to fear. "Been walking?"

"I played a game of pool," Butler smiled, and explained, "Nerves. I went out for a cigar, and I played a game of pool."

"Where?" Raye inquired.

"Benny's."

"I took a walk around to Benny's. I thought I might find you there."

"I must have stepped out," Butler said, meeting the Negro's eyes squarely. "You ought to be getting some rest. You took a bad licking."

"They thumped me, all right," Joey Raye said, genially. "They just whupped the devil out of me. My God and Jesus, them white men sure can do a whupping." He raised his

brows at the way Butler shivered. "Cold?" Butler nodded, and Raye said, "Step in here in the doorway and out of that wind. That wind's just like a razor's edge, just sharp and nasty as a razor, just like a razor I seen them city men carry. That's an awful mean and bad thing, a razor. I don't like a razor. I'd rather have a man come all over me with a sap than a razor."

"That's right," Butler nodded, stepping into the doorway, watching the Negro, trying to decide whether he was simple or not; he seemed simple; he had always seemed simple.

"Cigarette?"

Butler took a cigarette, but his hands were shaking and twice the light went out. Raye lit a match and held it in cupped hands, where it burned like a candle. "That's a ship-board trick," the Negro grinned. "First time I shipped out, it took me six weeks to learn to strike a match and hold it. Mighty handy trick to know. I guess you didn't know I ever shipped, did you, Freddy?"

Butler shook his head.

"I been around." Joey Raye went on. "My land, I been around, steel and auto and maritime and even a spell in packing in Omaha. That's sure one place, that Omaha. Its something, the places a man gets to in these United States, just trying to hold down a job and keeping his belly full. But that was in the bad old times—"

"I got to be getting home," Butler said. "If we get that line out at the crack of dawn—"

"You don't worry about that line," Joey Raye smiled. "How long you been in the party, Butler?"

"Just a few months. You know when I joined."

"Now sure enough, that's funny. That's mighty funny, because it seems to me I known someone like you a long time back, maybe in California or in Illinois or someplace. Well, maybe it's somebody else, I been in the party so long, and met so many. I been in the party a long time, Butler. Fifteen years, come this spring. That's mighty long time."

"It's a long time," Butler agreed.

"You know how I come to join—that's a funny thing too. My pappy, he cropped in Mississippi. He takes out a load of cotton, and I ride into the gin<sup>61</sup> with him—last load of all. He goes in to the boss man and settles and comes out and says to me, My word, Joey, I got just seventy-five cents, just holding that money out like that in the palm of his hand, a whole season's work. We was supposed to bring this and that for Ma and this and that for the two little girl sisters I got, but we wasn't going to bring back nothing, just that seventy-five cents my pappy holds out in his hand, and then just standing there he starts to cry, and I figured my heart's like to break. So I say to him, Don't you cry, Pappy. You go home. What you going to do? he asks me. I tell him, Don't you cry and don't you worry, you go home. Then I go in the gin, and I give that white boss a whupping like he never had in all his born days. Two other white men there, they don't like that, so I got to whup them too. Then they go for a pistol gun, and I got to take that away from them. Then I come outside, and Pappy's still there, crying for real now and he says to me, My God, oh my little Jesus God be gentle what you done now? I whupped them white men, I tell him and then he drives me into town, whupping them mules every inch of the way. They put me under my aunt's house, and there I stay two days and two nights while the whole damn county's being fine-combed for me. Then I hit a freight going up, and I never been back to Mississippi."

Butler's confidence was returning. He flicked the cigarette to the sidewalk and said, "Look, Joey, I got to get home."

"Sure—sure. I just set out to tell you how come I join the party, that's all. I knock around two, three years, just all over, doing nigger work, cleaning toilets, sweeping bars, shining shoes, washing dishes—and then there ain't even that. Ain't no work at all, not a blessed lick. All this time, I got a hate in my heart for white men that's festering like a cancer, just spreading out from my heart and all over me

and turning me into an animal instead of a human man. Then I'm in Pittsburgh, and it's a bad town back then in 'thirty-one. I meet up with a white feller who's trying to organize the unemployed. He buys me lunch. I never eat with a white man before, but I'm awful hungry. We go into a restaurant, and they try to throw us out, but he put up one awful fight, that white man. We end up in the can,<sup>85</sup> but the next day they throw us out, the can's so damn full. The white man tells me there going to be a demonstration, and I go along with him, always waiting for him to make a break, but he don't make a break. He treats me the way no white man ever treat me before. We go in that demonstration, with big banners calling for solidarity, maybe forty-fifty thousand folk, and the cops come in, and I don't know how to use my head yet, so I get an whupping and back in the can. The same white man come around with lawyers, and then after the cops whup me some more, they let me go. I'm still watching for him to make a break, and I still don't trust him, but little by little, he changes that. He teaches me. Ain't never had a day's schooling in my life, but he teaches me, and by and by I get a new slant on why things, they are what they are, and instead of living in a world of hate and murder, I got a brother in every man who works. I begin to see how hatred for the black man is a tool, and what a poor fool a human man is to let himself be used with that tool. Then I join the party. That's fifteen years ago, and the party's my mother and my sister and my brother and my whole goddam life, because no man's an angel or a saint and there are good men and bad men, but in the party, like Christ says, all men are brothers, and I seen the white and black shake hands and die for each other too." He took a long breath and then continued:

"I just tell you all this, Freddy, so you know how come I don't kill you. There ain't no use in that," he went on, gently, almost sadly. "Ain't no use in rubbing out one little speck of dirt. Just give me satisfaction, that's all, and I can do without that kind of satisfaction." He spread his great,

long-fingered hands. "I break you like I break a chicken with a mold on its skin—so what? There ain't no good comes from that. You go home, Freddy Butler. Get your wife and little ones, God help them, and go away on the milk train. Don't never come back."

Danny Ryan and Joey Raye were waiting in the littered executive office of the local when Bill Noska walked in, his big body loose, his face sad and querulous. He looked at them wonderingly and then he sat down behind his desk. "Where in hell were you?" Danny Ryan asked. Noska stared at him. "Did they hurt you bad?" "It's a pleasure," Ryan said, and momentarily Joey Raye grinned. "I like to be beat. I like to take it. I'm a dog for punishment." He gave Noska a brief description, and the big blond man shook his head and said, "The dirty bastards."

"I wish I believed you meant it," Ryan said.

"Why?"

"There's talk you had a meeting with Wilson," Joey Raye said flatly.

"That's no crime."

"It's no crime, but it don't sound too good."

Noska said, "Why in hell don't you wait until I sell out, Danny, before you hand it to me?"

"It's too late then."

"What I hate most about a red," Noska said, "is this goddamned aloof, superior attitude which says that anybody could be bought but one of you guys."

"Did they try to buy you?" Joey Raye asked softly.

"Feller by the name of Gelb," Noska said moodily.

"A sweet guy. He did the talking and he let Curzon do the mauling."

"Yeah. I remembered him from Pittsburgh. I worked in a mill there in 'thirty-five."

"But effective," Ryan said. "Maybe you'll listen to me now and put two thousand people up against that gate."

"They got the law," Noska said wearily.

"What are they going to do—arrest two thousand people? What in hell is wrong with you, Bill?"

"I just don't like to be pushed around by you babies!" Noska said savagely. "I don't like to be pushed around by Gelb and Wilson and I don't like to be pushed around by you guys! I want the membership to run this strike, not a little clique of reds!"

"You want us to pull out?" Joey Raye asked quietly.

"I want you to stop trying to take over."<sup>86</sup>

"Who says that? Wilson?" Ryan asked.

"I say it!"

"Why?" Ryan demanded, getting up, going over to the desk, and standing there with both hands on it. "Why do you say it? You know me a long time. You know Joey a long time. What in Christ's name do we want to take over, and why? Sure I'm a Communist. I never denied it. You know it—Wilson knows it too. I'm a Communist because I see every goddamned thing in this civilization of ours produced by the workers, coming out of their sweat and their work. I'm a worker. I always been a worker. I been a worker since I'm ten years old. I'm a Communist because I don't see anybody else willing to get his face pushed in or his throat cut or a bullet in his head because he's for the workers. I don't see anybody else who won't sell out."

"You mean I'm selling out?" Noska said coldly.

"The hell I do! I'm trying to get you to think, to use your head, to stop letting all that crap you hear split us wide open."

"It seems to me maybe you split us wider," Noska said.

"Do we? Who got the merchants in town to support the strike? Who set up the food kitchens? Who's been working day and night to bring in food, feed the salamanders, set up entertainment, keep the picket lines going? Answer that one."

"That's the point—for what you get out of it," Noska said wearily.

All right, all right, Bill. Look—you ain't made to believe that anybody does anything for nothing. I don't blame you, see. You live in a country that's got only one value, one standard, one measure, the buck. The quick buck, the sharp buck, the easy buck. Lay it on the line, printed in green, with a picture of Washington on it. That pays off, that tells the story. In other words, Moscow pays us, and we're in this racket for what comes out of it. But let me say something else—you and me, we're both Catholics. I broke with the church, you didn't. But we can talk the same language. I can talk about the brotherhood of man, and it ain't like I'm talking Chinese to you. I don't like to talk about it, because if ever a line was butchered out of meaning, it's that brotherhood-of-man stuff. But there's only one place I met with the brotherhood of man, and that's in the Communist Party!"



**Beth McHenry  
and Frederick N. Myers**

## **A UNION IS BORN**

*(Excerpts from the Novel "Home is the Sailor")*

In mid-afternoon of a day in October, 1932, the small freighter *Fielding* steamed into the harbor of San Francisco. In her hold was general cargo<sup>1</sup> from a score of eastern warehouses—shoes, caps and workshirts, machine parts, steel girders, automobile tires, glassware, and a variety of other items fitting into the scheme of American living.

Billy Farrell, who was rigging gear on the deck of the freighter as she came into the harbor, paused for a moment to draw breath and take in the scene. The blue waters of the bay were shot with gold from a retreating sun, and the gulls swooped in formation to the decks of vessels in the harbor.

Billy looked up at the beautiful hills of San Francisco, glanced back on the Gate through which they had passed, noted the jewel-like islands that sparkled in the middle of the bay, and heaved a sigh.

A few years ago San Francisco had been a real Sailors' Delight, a wonderful, hospitable town, even to the low-paid men of the sea. It was a cosmopolitan city, rich in places to eat and things to see, and the people were warm and friendly.

Billy had hit San Francisco just six months before, in the spring. He had found the heart of the Golden West<sup>2</sup> as

gloomy and heavy with depression as any other city in the states. The factories of Oakland and South San Francisco were shut down.

To the docks came thousands of workers from other industries and trades, turning to longshore<sup>3</sup> for a possible day's work, adding their desolate numbers to the already overlarge waterfront population.

Ten years of seafaring had taken the fresh young spirit out of the Pennsylvania lad to whom the universe had beckoned so compellingly.

Sometimes Billy wished he had not seen so much of the world. Perhaps, he thought, a man could weather hard times better if he believed they were the particular property of one little city or even one country. But when he knew that the thing called depression was a world-wide condition, involving millions and millions of people, the idea of it was enough to drive him crazy. Deep inside Billy had no real faith that there would or could be any recovery from the blight which had crossed the earth. He did know that the depression scenes of his own country were peanuts<sup>4</sup> compared to those of other nations. In London and Marseilles, the docks were festered with gaunt-looking adults and sickly kids. While in the Far East, in Bombay and Shanghai and Yokohama, humanity actually had become as animal life, begging, stealing, crawling for food, filthy with disease and rotting away.

\* \* \*

With the ship safely tied up, Billy watched the United States Commissioner<sup>5</sup> come aboard, as pompous as a British ambassador. The Commissioner was the paymaster, and Farrell fell into the line that formed on deck, terminating at the captain's cabin.

Glancing to the head of the line, Billy saw the master whispering to the Commissioner. The old man was a notorious rummy, stupid and brutal, hostile to mankind in general and to sailors in particular. Farrell had come in for his share of trouble with the old bird.

Billy stepped forward and said "Farrell." The Commissioner glanced at the payroll, then at the captain. The old man looked at Farrell.

"Two days for missing a watch," he grunted.

The Commissioner observed the young seaman distastefully, as if making up his mind whether to pay him anything at all.

Billy stood with his legs spread apart, his whole body hot with anger. He looked at the rum-red face of the old man, with its bleary eyes and porous nose, and wanted to smash him one. With the Commissioner aboard it would be worse than suicide. There were enough ships now from which he was barred for saying what he thought.

Farrell stood rigid until the Commissioner handed him nineteen dollars and fifty cents and thrust the book forward for him to sign. He had not missed a watch. The money deducted from his pay was for telling the old man he couldn't navigate his way out of a paper bag. Billy had popped off one night when the master had come to the wheelhouse drunk and nearly put the ship ashore.

Billy took the dough and counted it deliberately. He bent over and signed the book, writing out "William Farrell" with a flourish.

The captain looked up at Farrell.

"We can do without you next trip," he said, pulling at his big nose.

Billy held back an urge to tell the old man off. Instead, he pocketed the slim roll and went below to pick up his gear.

Peterson, his watch partner, was emptying his bunk when Farrell entered the fo'c's'le.<sup>6</sup> Ordinarily quiet, the Norwegian had opened up to Billy a couple of times on the night watch. There was something about this youngster, smouldering resentment against things as they were and a quick intelligence, that stirred old ideas in Peterson and made him give vent to hopes still latent within him.

One night on watch he had let go, unburdening himself of thirty-five years of anger, blasting the miserable operation

of marine transport and the whole system of economy which tied good men to low wages and the stink of the fo'c's'le and put irresponsible idiots on the bridge.' He was speaking with fervor of the necessity and inevitability of socialism.

Farrell, who never had sailed to the Scandinavian ports, had heard that order and prosperity prevailed in the small northern countries.

"What about your own country?" he asked the Norwegian. "Don't you have some kind of socialism there?"

Peterson snorted angrily, looking up at the stars to witness the blasphemy of this youth.

"Socialism!" he said. "Socialism, you call that! My boy, that's the same goddam British imperialism you see everywhere else on the face of the globe, only in my part of the world it's all tidied up to look nice. The economy of Norway and Denmark and Sweden is in the same old evil hands. The little boys run off to sea at fourteen just as I did because there's nothing at home for them. No, Billy, that sure as hell ain't socialism. It's just a mask for the devil."

Billy Farrell liked to hear men talk politics. Two years ago in Seattle Billy had mingled with an assortment of radicals,<sup>8</sup> among whom were a number of Communists. He thought they talked too damned much about Russia and not enough about the United States of America. He said as much.

"But Russia has had her socialist revolution," one of the Seattle Communists explained to Billy. "She is the one country in the world that has traveled that far, and we have to study what happens to her."

"Maybe," replied Billy, on the defensive. "But my problem is here. You just go ahead and show me how we can get jobs and good wages in this country. Then I'll listen to whatever you want to tell me about Russia."

Nevertheless, Billy Farrell did retain some of the ideas these people had planted in his mind. Like most seamen of the depression period, young Farrell was an angry radical with unformed opinions. The idea of revolution neither

shocked him nor sounded foreign. He knew as well as the Communists did that America had started in revolution. When he looked around at the unemployed and the shutdown industrial plants, he damn well could believe in revolution. But who would lead it and how?

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Leaving the dock, Billy Farrell headed for Mission Street and the Fink Hall<sup>9</sup> to register for another ship. The entire front<sup>10</sup> was as silent as a tomb. There was neither laughter nor loud talking, for one of the first things that unemployed men lose is the power of speech.

At the hall on Mission Street, he entered a big room. Hundreds of men milled about.

If a man was lucky, he might get a ship before he hit skid row. Usually, however, Burton, the dispatcher in the 'Frisco hall, saved the jobs for the cards that came wrapped in ten dollar bills.

Billy stood in line, but he did not unwind any ten spot<sup>11</sup> from his small roll. After all his knocking about the world, graft<sup>12</sup> still turned his stomach. He would not have bought a job if he were lined with ten spots.

Billy fitted into the general picture. His one suit of clothes was in a New York hockshop<sup>13</sup>. He was wearing khakis and hickory<sup>14</sup> shirt. Billy was a medium-sized man, neither tall nor short, but his bone structure was broad and he looked strong. His hair was curly and blond, and his eyes were deep blue, eyes that could flash gaily, or switch rapidly from mirth to anger, or radiate warmth and friendship.

Within the crowd, however, he was part of it, a shabby, declassed worker, standing in line for a job at an itinerant trade, a very model of depression.

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San Francisco was tucked beneath its evening blanket of fog when Billy Farrell reached the Southern Pacific yards to wait for a train going down the coast. The railroad yard

was crowded with potential passengers for the freight cars. They sat in groups, silent for the most part, men of all sizes, ages, and nationalities waiting for night to fall so that they might climb into the box cars and gondolas<sup>15</sup> that made the passage down the coast the slow way.

Among the box car passengers were a few ex-railroad workers. They would give advice to new travelers.

"Don't be a scenery bum," they would warn a curious youngster who wanted to see everything. "Don't go sticking your neck out of a gondola or you'll get your head chopped off."

When the overhead grew darker, Billy climbed into an empty box car and waited for an engine to pull it out of the yard. Soon another traveler climbed over the side of the car and settled opposite Billy.

The newcomer rustled with the makings of a cigarette.

"You got a match there, partner?" he asked Billy.

Billy bent across the gloom to hold a flame to the fellow's cigarette. The flash of light revealed a young face above a lanky frame in jeans<sup>16</sup> and a work shirt.

"Kansas?" asked Billy.

"Nope,"<sup>17</sup> said the boy "I come from Nebraska. Worked through the harvest, and there ain't another job in the state, at least not till spring. Our farm got foreclosed<sup>18</sup> and my sister took in the folks. I thought I'd git on out here before it got too cold. Where you heading?

"Pedro."<sup>19</sup>

"Sailor, huh?" the lad said. "I sure wouldn't mind taking a turn around the world myself. Only they say it's harder getting started on ships now than anywhere else."

Billy and the Nebraska boy sat without speaking for a few minutes.

"Jeez," the kid said finally. "What's a fellow going to do, mister, you got any ideas?"

Billy smashed out the glow in his cigarette, crushing it, between his thumb and forefinger. He wished he had the box car to himself. His head ached and he felt chilled.

"You can always blow your brains out, son," he said.

Far ahead the engine began to pull the parade of box cars and gondolas. They would move forward in abrupt jerks, then back up suddenly, jam together, and rattle in terrible confusion. The wheels screeched sickeningly against the rails. There were voices outside. Billy warned Nebraska to move back.

"And put out your cigarette, son," he added. "It might be a bull."<sup>20</sup>

No one bothered them, however, and after a few minutes of waiting the train crawled on, along the bay's edge, heading south slowly.

Billy dozed. The kid sat huddled against the opposite side of the car, his knees near his chin.

Somewhere down the peninsula the train lurched to a dead stop, waiting for the tracks ahead to clear. Jolted, Billy rolled over on his side and opened his eyes. Above the screech of the wheels he heard the kid sobbing.

"Hey, now, buddy," Billy said. "That ain't going to do you no good, you know."

The kid wiped his nose on his shirt sleeve and tried to control his weeping.

"I guess you been kicking around a long time, mister," he said. "But this is the first time for me. I ain't had nothing to eat since the day before yesterday. I don't want to be out on the road. I wish I was home. What the hell do you want me to do, laugh?"

"Sure, kid," Billy advised. "You laugh if you can. Otherwise you won't get through it, take it from me. Maybe this is your first time hungry, but it ain't likely to be your last. You better get used to it as quick as you can."

Nevertheless, the kid's tears unnerved Billy.

"When we get to San Jose," he said, "you can pile off with me and I'll get you a feed. You'd better learn the ropes" before winter sets in, son."

"I guess you don't believe in no religion, do you?" the kid asked.

Billy shook his head.

"When I was a little kid the landlord had us evicted from the house we lived in because we owed four months rent. My mother was sick and the old man was out of work. The old lady told us kids to pray to God that we could stay in the house, at least until she got better. We prayed and prayed and they came and put us out all the same. My mother was in a public hospital six months while the neighbors helped my father with us kids. I figured if there really was a God he sure wouldn't have let that happen to my mother. I haven't seen anything since that made me change my mind."

The lad sighed.

"If there ain't nothing above and there ain't nothing below either, it just looks like a lot of misery for nothing, don't it?"

It was not yet five o'clock when Billy reached the center of San Pedro. The Fink Hall was on Fifth Street. He went there to register for shipping. He also wanted to find out if anybody he knew was on the beach.

At the Fink Hall Billy put his name on the shipping list and said hello to a couple of sailors he knew. One of them was Herbie Masters, an old shipmate from the Cass Line.

Billy was glad to see Masters. He remembered how Masters always gave the other men hell for not fighting the ship-owners. Masters was a good shipmate. Even those who didn't join his union had regard for him.

Billy shook hands and grinned.

"You Reds still holding down this port?"

Farrell had a good deal of respect for the few men he knew who were members of the MWIU.<sup>22</sup> He had been told that many of its members and all of its leaders were Communists. San Pedro was a concentration point for them.

When Billy had been in San Pedro the year before MWIU seemed to him far too small to be effective, just a little bunch of radical sailors beating their heads against the



shipowners' door, not even getting a toehold in the industry. The M&W, he felt, was much too tied up with everything that happened anywhere in the world, instead of concerning itself with the wages, hours, and working conditions of American seamen.

"Porkchops,"<sup>21</sup> thought Billy Farrell, "come first. The hell with the invasion of Manchuria. What's that got to do with me?"

Masters said he had just come off a tanker. He told Billy he had spent the summer on the beach in Baltimore, waiting for a ship.

"Christ, what a hungry town," he said with a grimace. "They don't even pick up the garbage there any more. But it disappears."

"You show me a town that ain't hungry," Billy said. "I'm looking for it."

Masters looked at Farrell curiously.

"You're probably dumb enough to figure you'll stumble on it," he said with a grunt. "Why don't you turn to the fight for a setup<sup>27</sup> that'll feed you?"

Billy shrugged. He was too tired to put up an argument.

"Come on," Masters said. "I'll get you a room and a meal ticket while I'm still holding heavy."<sup>25</sup>

Billy Farrell remained on the beach in San Pedro during November and December. Shipping was at a standstill. At the Fink Hall jobs came through so slowly that they hardly made a dent on the waterfront population. One sailor Billy talked to had a shipping card a hundred and thirty days old.

Billy had not gone hungry since he arrived. Pedro was a better port than Frisco for seamen on the hummer.<sup>26</sup> A man could almost always catch a heaving line<sup>27</sup> from a live wire<sup>28</sup> off a ship.

Billy never felt embarrassment about accepting pieceoffs from sailors who came ashore holding heavy. It was an ac-

cepted practice in the industry. Only a lousy guy kept all his dough<sup>29</sup> for himself.

On a warm night a gang of sailors would head for Long Beach and the Pike, where radicals and soul savers<sup>30</sup> soap-boxed<sup>31</sup> side by side. The radical speakers drew interested attention from the seamen and other unemployed workers.

Billy found himself listening ever more intently to the Communist soapboxers. They had a program for ending the depression, the first one he had heard that made sense. Make the government open up the factories and put people to work!—the Communist speakers demanded. Make the government open up the warehouses and distribute food and clothing to the unemployed! Demonstrate for unemployment insurance and public works! Stop lying down to misery!

"What's wrong with that?" thought Billy. It sounded sensible to him and he applauded with the others who listened.

More and more, as he remained on the beach in San Pedro, Billy found himself mingling with Communist seamen. At first they had sought him, but now he went looking for them. His respect for the leaders of the Red union increased as he watched them at work. They never seemed to tire. They had, too, a buoyancy and optimism that set them apart from other men in the same industry. Once Billy mentioned this to Herbie Masters.

"Sure," the freckled seaman replied. "That's because when you're fighting for something you're alive. And when you ain't, you're just a dead man walking around waiting for someone to push you into the ground."

Not since he first had come on the beach in San Pedro had Masters or any of the other MWIU guys urged Billy to join the union. Then he had refused, insisting that they were too concerned with international politics to pay attention to the pork-chop situation on American ships.

Little by little, however, Billy became aware that these militants did a great deal to help better the conditions of the seamen.

Once in a while a hot ship<sup>32</sup> would come into port, and the MWIU would spread a picket line before the dock to call attention to the mean wages and lousy conditions aboard her. Often the picket line would embarrass the crew into leaving the ship. Then the company would have a difficult time getting another to board her, even out of the Fink Hall on Beacon Street. Even the unorganized seamen were respectful of a picket line.

In almost every case, although the MWIU never succeeded in getting the members of a struck crew reinstated, conditions aboard the ship were improved. The militants would hail this as an important victory.

Billy formed the habit of dropping around to see what was happening.

Gradually the issues and organizations of the Left became assembled in Billy Farrell's mind, fitting into an overall picture that made sense.

As the year drew to a close, Billy began to consider traveling to the Gulf by box car. He was getting restless. At the MWIU hall he talked to Charley Barnes one of the old timers of the union, who gave him a couple of shoreside contacts<sup>33</sup> for Houston and New Orleans.

Billy said "thanks" and turned to say goodbye to Herbie Masters who was sitting at one of the tables in a corner of the room. Suddenly Billy flushed.

"Why the hell don't you guys ask me to join your outfit?" he asked angrily. Charley looked at Herbie and smiled quietly.

"We had you sized up as a man who would come into the union after you got it all figured out right in your head," he said to Billy. "We decided not to ask you any more until you got ready."

Masters drew a blank union book from a drawer in the table and wrote Billy's name on it. He handed it to Farrell with a grin. "Now you've got an organization behind you," he said.

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The big beef<sup>34</sup> among the sailors on the *Rita* was unpaid overtime.<sup>35</sup> In the fo'c's'le Billy Farrell heard stories from men who had made three and four voyages aboard the South American liner. The company's practice was to work the crew twelve and thirteen hours at a stretch for a straight fifty dollars a month.

For the first time in many years, the sailors were talking strike. Miserable sleeping quarters and bad food sharpened their anger, and they hated the chief mate, a White-Russian emigré and a former officer in the Imperial Russian Navy.

Billy sized up the mate the first night out. As bosun's<sup>36</sup> mate, he went to the officers' quarters midship for the night schedule<sup>37</sup> of work. The chief, a gray haired, coldly handsome aristocrat of fifty, gave the sailor orders beyond the capacities of the small night gang. Billy protested.

The chief studied Farrell's face sternly.

"I trust we are not going to have trouble with you, too," he said stiffly.

Billy flushed angrily.

"The trouble is with the schedule," he replied. "It's too heavy."

The chief's face darkened.

"You have my orders," he told Billy. "Now get the men to work."

Back on deck Billy related the conversation to Joe Berthier, a French Canadian from Providence. Berthier, a member of the Marine Workers Industrial Union, had been on the *Rita* two trips. He laughed.

"That son of a bitch thinks he's still in the Tsar's navy," he said. "But this crew is going to tell him off plenty before this trip is over. You wait."

The *Rita's* last stop before Valpo<sup>38</sup> was Antofagasta, the nitrate center of the world. Passenger ships did not take on the dangerous nitrate cargo, but they did load copper at

Antofagasta. Ordinarily they would take on cargo on the way back from Valpo. The *Rita*, however, had emptied her load considerably coming down. The captain issued orders to take on cargo now in order to save loading time during the return voyage.

The ship dropped anchor in the harbor late in the evening. A copper barge came alongside, carrying sheets of metal. Chilean longshoremen, hungry looking and lean, boarded the vessel, dropping lightly into the hold to catch the copper as the boom's whip<sup>39</sup> brought it down. The whip, with its mouthful of copper sheeting, would swing with the roll of the ship.

All night the longshoremen worked the cargo. Billy Farrell and the rest of the night gang watched the operation from deck.

"A peso a day those poor devils get," Joe Berthier muttered, "and their lives ain't worth a damn."

It was past two A. M.<sup>40</sup> The ship had long been quiet except for the sound of the loading, when the sailors on deck heard a prolonged scream from the depths of the vessel. A terrified echoing cry came from the barge tied alongside.

Billy and Berthier hurried to the scene of loading. The whip still was below in the hold. The sailors climbed over its edge, dropping to the interior of the ship.

A stevedore who had been waiting below for the sheets of copper lay against a pile of metal, dead. His body had not dropped to the floor. The legs had been severed by the edge of the copper, as the ship rolled and the cargo swung pendulum fashion in the hold. The longshoreman had been caught between two stacks.<sup>41</sup>

The chief mate arrived on the scene. From the deck he shouted down to find out what had happened. Billy reported in a tense voice.

There was a brief silence above. Then the mate called down coolly and somewhat impatiently. "Well, bring the fellow up and put him on the barge."

Billy and Joe found a piece of canvas. Into it they put the shortened body of the dead man, throwing the legs into the sling after the torso. The whip had been lifted from the mouth of the hold, and the men climbed up with their burden.

Farrell dropped his end of the sling before the mate

"This is your responsibility," he told the mate, pointing to the corpse. "Why the hell do you make men work without safety measures?"

"Hold your tongue," said the chief in cold fury. "I'll have you put in irons. The fool was careless and careless men pay for their foolishness."

The rest of the gang stood about the deck listening to the exchange between the bosun's mate and the chief.

The mate turned abruptly and returned to his cabin, fuming. The other sailors gathered around Billy.

"Attaboy, Farrell," one of them said "That's telling that Russky count off"

Then they remembered the dead man. They grimly helped load the body onto the barge where the other stevedores received it silently.

In the morning Billy went below, tense with the expectancy of trouble. He reported what had happened to the rest of the men in the fo'c's'le. They seemed ready for any action that might come about.

When the ship docked in Valparaiso the temper of the crew was at high pitch. The fo'c's'le and messroom rang with angry talk.

The *Rita* docked early in the morning. Billy hurried ashore. The ship was scheduled to remain a day and a half in the Chilean port. Billy and Joe went ashore together...

The other day the *Rita's* whistles were blowing when he approached the Cass Line pier.

As he crossed the gangway, Billy's eyes met a strange sight. Ordinarily, on getaway day, all hands would be standing on the deck of the ship, fore and aft, waiting to let go the lines.<sup>43</sup>

Today however the men stood in sullen small groups,

nowhere near the lines. The chief mate was screaming at the bosun, who looked frightened, but did not say anything to the crew.

Among the sailors on deck was Dugan. When he saw Farrell he burst into a loud guffaw.

"It's happened, Billy," he cried. "The boys have struck."

Hearing him, the mate turned and saw Billy. He raised his hands above his head and screamed, "There is the Bolshevik who started it all!"

"You'll go back in irons," he yelled at Farrell. "When we reach New York you'll go to jail for mutiny!"

Billy ignored the screaming mate. He joined the men who stood huddled at one end of the deck.

The captain appeared on deck. The crew had had little to do with the master during the trip to Valparaiso. He was a heavy-set, baldheaded man with a pompous, distant air. In the administration of the ship he leaned heavily upon the mate.

Confronted by the practically unheard of situation of a strike, aboard the ship, the master looked horrified, but helpless.

The crew elected Berthier, Farrell, and a sailor named Tom Simms to talk to the captain. They ignored the mate, insisting that he not be in on the discussions.

Meeting with the master on deck, they recounted their grievances, emphasizing the despicable behavior of the ship's chief officer. The chief, listening from the sidelines, maintained a stony silence.

The captain rubbed his hand across his chin. He suggested they let go the lines and then talk business.

"If you'll sail the ship now," he promised, "we'll take up your complaints one by one and try to settle them before we get back to New York."

The delegates reported back to the crew. The men shouted agreement. Never before on a Cass Lines ship had a captain deigned to listen to the grievances of a crew, let alone promise action. With unanimous agreement, they set to work.

When the *Rita* steamed into New York harbor three weeks later, the sailors were paid off in body after having been logged for insubordination.<sup>44</sup> They were notified that never again could any of them sail on Cass Line ships.

\* \* \*

There was nothing gay about South Street's springtime in 1933. The docks were still idle. Along the entire East River waterfront shabby seamen clustered, some in hard-talking groups, angry and animated, others in the silent attitude of men who have given way to despair.

Twice daily there was an exodus from the front as the unemployed seamen swarmed to the "Doghouse" for their portion of institution food,<sup>45</sup> or tackled the soup-kitchen queues which stretched before the Bowery Missions and other seats of depression charity.

Billy Farrell surveyed the scene with new bitterness. The trip on the *Rita* had effected a change in him. The job action aboard the ship in Valparaiso had shown him the power and strength of workers organized, while in the betrayal of the captain's agreement he saw the whole contemptuous attitude of industry<sup>46</sup> toward labor.

Never again would Billy Farrell believe the word of a boss. He swore to himself that if he took part in another strike he would see to it that no worker returned to his job until he had his gains right in his pocket.

Looking down crowded South Street, Billy realized why the Cass Lines could behave so arrogantly toward the workers it employed. For every man who refused to work for little, another, hungrier, could be had from this vast unemployed army for less.

Billy went to the MWIU hall. For the first time he felt an integral part of the union. Al Ferris, the Italian sailor whom Billy first had met in San Pedro and later in New York, called a hearty "hello" as Farrell entered.

Al had curly dark hair, fair skin and smiling blue eyes. His lips were parted constantly in a toothy warm grin.



Articulate and fiery in his manner, he was one of the union's best organizers. He hurried across the room to pump Billy's hand and ask about the trip to South America.

When Billy told about the strike action and the subsequent firings and blacklisting, the organizer almost roared: "Where's the rest of the crew? Why didn't you bring them up here with you?"

"Christ's sake, man," he shouted angrily, "what do you think a union's for? Here you got a bunch of men that had the guts to do something about conditions and you let them scatter like leaves in the wind. Those are the kind of people we need to change things in this industry."

Then he put his hand on Farrell's arm.

"Okay, kid, you'll learn," he said more gently. "Let's get the hell out of here. I've got some things I'd like to talk to you about."

Billy went with him down the rickety stairs and across the street to a coffeepot.

"Pile up a couple of plates there, Joe," Al called to the man behind the counter. "I got a live wire here who's springing for stew."

Joe shrugged and threw a couple of dinners together.

"You never tell me who's going to pay for all them other dinners that's crossed this counter going your way," he grumbled good-naturedly.

Ferris laughed.

"The nerve of this guy," he said to Billy. "First he gives me ulcers" and then he wants to get paid for it." Then, with abrupt seriousness, he burst out: "Why don't you join the party, you bum?"

Billy sat for a few minutes, chewing silently on the rubbery stew. In his own mind he was trying to frame an answer for Al's question. Suddenly he realized he didn't have one.

There had been a time when Billy thought the party's internationalism was barking up a wrong tree.<sup>48</sup> He no longer thought so. Now, particularly since the trip to "Valpo,"

he felt very keenly how cruelly the American system affected the lives of other people all over the world, and of how their miserable situation threatened American workers.

Another point of resentment that no longer carried weight with Billy was what he had thought of as the too-strict party discipline. The idea of disciplined action now seemed to him sensible and necessary. It even appealed to him as something he could accept with pleasure as long as he believed in the reason for it.

"Go ahead and give me your reasons, bud," Al prodded, his mouth full of stew.

Billy grinned.

"I was just thinking that I guess I haven't got any reasons good enough to talk about," he said. "What do you have to do to join the Communist Party?"

Al shoved his plate across the counter and let out a hearty roar of approval.

"Good boy," he said. "I spotted you back there in Pedro."

\* \* \*

One of the first demonstrations in which Billy took part that spring was at the "Doghouse." As a result of it he had his first taste of a New York jail and a first-hand encounter with the brutality of New York's "finest."<sup>49</sup>

The seamen beefed angrily while waiting on the "humiliation line," as they called the breakfast and dinner queue outside the "Doghouse" office. The Sailors Christian Institute, as they knew, collected large sums of money on the basis of giving assistance to needy seamen, but very little of the money went into the stewpot.

The Marine Workers Industrial Union organized a demonstration in Lorraine Square, across from the "Doghouse," in protest against the lousy rations being doled out to the unemployed seamen. Billy and four others were named a committee to visit the administration to demand improved food and more of it.

The office of the Institute's director was on the second

floor of the big building. This was Billy's first experience as a member of a delegation on such a mission. As he followed the others upstairs he hoped desperately that the words would come out right if he were called upon to say something.

Shorty Roberts, an old-timer in the union, had been designated chairman of the committee. He marched at the head of the delegation.

The director's name was Shelton. He was a portly-looking man, with the self-righteous mien of a public servant having his photograph taken. Evidently he had been forewarned about the delegation for, as they ascended the stairs, he appeared at the landing above and looked down upon them disdainfully.

Unabashed, Roberts turned to the others.

"Come on, guys," he said. The five brushed past the director and went into his office without waiting for an invitation.

Shelton, his face flushed, followed them and shut the door behind him.

"Now what's all this about?" he demanded sternly.

Roberts and the others aligned themselves in an emphatic row before the director.

"We're here to demand three meals a day and grub that's fit to eat instead of the garbage they're putting out down there," Shorty said, jerking his head in the direction of the kitchen below.

The director looked outraged.

"You talk as if you were paying for your meals," he said contemptuously. "May I remind you that if it were not for the generosity and public spiritedness of this institution you would all go without food most of the time? And how do you suggest that we shall get the money to feed three meals a day to five thousand men?"

Shorty Roberts smiled grimly and looked the director in the eye.

"Ah-h-h, don't give us that crap, mister," he declared.

"We know how you collect the dough and that you collect more than you put out. If you want us to we'll inform your generous contributors just what we get to eat here every day and see how it affects their attitude toward you."

Shelton fumbled with his watch chain, frowning. He raised his hand in a gesture of conciliation.

"Wait a minute here, men," he said. "I'll get hold of the steward and we'll talk this thing over. Maybe something can be done."

The director left the room. The sailors relaxed their positions. Billy glanced at Shorty. The small seaman shook his head.

"There's something fishy about his suddenly getting so agreeable," he warned. "He's probably gone to get the cops."

One of the others looked startled.

"What shall we do?" he asked. "*Haul ass?*"<sup>50</sup>

Shorty looked disgusted.

"Because of a few cops? Nuts," he said. "Let them bring the whole goddamned force here. The more noise there is to this thing the better chance we stand of getting some improvements."

Shorty proved right. Within fifteen minutes director Shelton returned to his office. Behind him were four beefy, armed policemen.

"There they are," said the director, looking as pleased as if he had captured a gang of killers singlehanded.

The cops charged into the room. One grabbed Billy's arm and brought a night stick down on his head. The blow sent the sailor reeling. . . . In the *mêlée*<sup>51</sup> that followed Billy could hear the angry voice of Roberts ranting about constitutional rights. Clubs were flying wildly.

Suddenly Roberts made a break.

"Let's get out of here," he called to the others and led the way to the door.

A shot rang out. A voice with a thick brogue sent curses across the room.

"Oh no, you don't, you son of a bitch," yelled the cop. "Resist arrest, will you?"

He brought the butt of his pistol down hard on Roberts' head. As Shorty fell, the big cop bent over him, covering the little sailor with his gun.

Billy started for Shorty. Another blow on the head blinded him, blotting out the room. When he regained consciousness, he was being dragged down the stairs by two of the cops. Reaching the street, they shoved him into a waiting patrol wagon.

Billy slumped, nauseous and consumed with pain, against the side wall of the Black Maria.

At the Old Slip Station<sup>52</sup> he and the three others who had been brought in the wagon were fingerprinted and herded into a filthy cell. Shorty had been rushed to a hospital under heavy guard.

Billy's head throbbed violently. Hatred and anger brought life back to him quickly. He felt like knocking down the bars of the cell.

"We were asking for food," he reminded himself, "and they shot Shorty. The sons of bitches!"

Parking his bruised body on one of the filthy bunks, he wondered why it had taken him so long to join the Communist Party.

"It's not enough that they can't provide jobs," he said out loud. "But this is what they do if you ask for something to eat."

Syd Moore, a tall skinny sailor who was nursing a shiner<sup>53</sup> cheerfully, looked at Farrell.

"Democracy's what they call it, brother," he remarked sardonically.

Toward evening the jailed sailors had a visit from a lawyer. The lawyer, who identified himself as a member of the staff of the International Labor Defense, was shabby and quiet mannered. A cop unlocked the cell door and let him inside.

The visitor explained that Al Ferris called the ILD and

asked them to send someone around to get the seamen out of jail.

"They've got charges five feet tall waiting to book you on," he said with a smile. "Everything but arson and rape. But I think they'll drop the whole business when they hear the racket that's coming from Larraine Square. I wouldn't worry too much, if I were you. I don't think this thing will go to court. If it does, we'll handle it okay."

The lawyer was right. Without having been booked on any charges at all, the four were released that same night.

Billy went to the union hall. MWIU headquarters was jammed with angry sailors, all talking about what had happened at the "Doghouse." As Farrell entered, Ferris caught sight of him and hurried forward.

"You okay, kid?" he asked anxiously.

Billy nodded, pointing to his head with a grin.

"The cruller's a little soft,"<sup>54</sup> he said. "A cop came down on it with a stick." He asked about Shorty.

"He's okay." Al reported. "I was over there a half hour ago and they'll probably let him out tomorrow. The shot nicked his leg. It'd take more than lead to hurt that little guy," he added admiringly.

Ferris described the big protest demonstration that had been mobilized in Larraine Square after the arrests. Shelton had come down to assure the men that the delegation would be released from jail without charges and that the question of better food and more of it would be taken up at once.

"Mass action, kid," Al remarked with conviction. "That's the trick every time. Remember it."

As Billy remained on the beach he began to notice a slight change of atmosphere on the front. Fight was replacing the despairing spirits of the unemployed seamen. The waterfront, like the fo'c's'les of American ships, was reflecting the growing sentiment of the sailors for a union.

Dockside meetings where Ferris and other MWIU leaders held forth were attended by increasing numbers. Police

attacks only called forth greater support from the previously inert masses.

The improved atmosphere on the front, however, did not reflect any improvement in employment. Each week Billy covered the company offices from which he was not black-listed. On a day when a vessel was due in, he would make the shape-up<sup>55</sup> on the dock, standing in the crowd before the shipping master's cage while jobs were called.

After seven weeks on the beach, he got a tip about the *Ex-Call* from another sailor staying at Annie's. He went to Jersey City and shaped up for the job. Luck was with him and he signed on the ship, freighter bound for the Mediterranean and Black Sea run.

\* \* \*

In the fo'c's'le of the *Ex-Call*, the sailors slept six in a room. As Al Ferris had predicted, there were other MWIU men aboard, one of whom was a member of the Communist Party as well.

Billy found the discussion which raged constantly in the fo'c's'le enlightening and stimulating. He began to pal around with Mead Brown, the Communist. Brown was a big Texan with a drawl that took the edge off the bitter things he said.

Brown had been a Gulf<sup>56</sup> stiff since he was a kid, sailing in the tanker trade. He knew what it was like to buck corruption in the oil ports where he had helped in the early attempts to organize the industry.

Mead was the tallest man in the fo'c's'le. His legs hung over the foot of his bunk when he lay on it. His skin was weatherbeaten and made him look older than his thirty-eight years. His brown eyes gazed shrewdly and with humor behind wrinkled eyelids.

"I didn't have much to do with unions or even with union talk," he reminisced, "until one night a gang comes for me in the rooming house where I'm shacking up. I wake up to see a flashlight blazing in my face and a big voice is

saying. 'You the bastard that's been talking out of turn? Well, you just shut up that big mouth of yours, brother, or someone else is agoing to shut it the hell for you and for good.' "

There was the usual mixed crew aboard the *Ex-Call*. There were Puerto Ricans, Italians, Irishmen, and Scandinavians in the deck and engine gangs, and two Negroes in the stewards department.

Philip Forbes, an elderly, gray-haired Negro from Boston, had one of the toughest jobs on the ship. He served the officers' mess. This was Forbes' fifth voyage aboard the *Ex-Call* as messman, although he once had sailed on the bridge as chief mate.

Billy heard the story of Forbes from Mead Brown, who seemed to know all there was to know about everybody in the crew.

The Negro seaman had been prominent in the '21 strike. He had led the entire crew off a ship on which he was the mate. Never since had he been able to sail on his license.<sup>57</sup> When the strike was broken, the militants were blackballed<sup>58</sup> consistently, and Negroes were confined to the galley. The only job he had been able to get during all those years was that of messboy.

The food situation on the *Ex-Call* was no better than on any other ship on which Billy had sailed. The seamen grumbled in the crews' mess. Even in the officers' dining room, where the victuals were better, the mates and engineers growled about the chow. Unlike the unlicensed men, who blamed the company, the officers would take out their gripes on the messman.

Forbes was patient, but dignified. When they yelled at him about the food, he would remind the officers that the company provided it.

"Don't beef with me," he told them. "Just take it up with the company officials before you sign on next trip."

The chief mate, a Virginian, resented Forbes' lack of



servility. On the tenth day of the Atlantic crossing there was trouble in the officers' mess.

Forbes, weary of the complaints, reminded the mates and engineers again that the bad food situation was not his responsibility.

The mate, red-headed and mean-looking, turned nastily on the Negro.

"I'd advise you not to tell officers aboard this vessel what to do, boy," he said. "You're here to serve us and not to make speeches against the company."

Forbes put down a pile of dishes he had started to carry to the galley.

"I've got a chief's license myself," he remarked coolly. "I reckon I know more about sailing ships than most of the men at this table."

The mate rose from the table. He leaned menacingly toward the messman.

"No nigger's got brains enough to sail a ship," he growled. "That's why they took your license away from you, boy."

Forbes held his ground, facing the mate scornfully.

"No one took my license away," he remarked. "Just some scabs took our jobs while we were striking."

The mate pushed back his chair and leaped at the Negro. Two engineers joined the attack. Forbes resisted, but the combination of youth and numbers was too great.

The scuffle was heard in the crews' messroom across the passageway. The sailors and firemen rushed through the pantry alley in time to see Forbes lying on the deck, pinned down by the two engineers, while the chief mate kicked him.

Brown cursed and tore through the narrow doorway. Billy and the others followed. The Texan pulled the officer away from the Negro.

The mate, panting and red in the face, stepped back.

"You keep out of this, Brown," he warned.

Mead Brown helped Forbes to his feet. The messman left.

the dining room and returned to the galley, pushing his way through the crowd of sailors gathered about the door.

Brown eyed the mate steadily.

"Listen, mister," he said. "I'm a southerner myself and I can't always control my temper either. So you just don't pull that kind of stuff no more, you hear? That mate shouldn't be waiting on you in the first place. He's got sailing time that make yours look like a first trip to sea."

Brown strode from the officers' dining room and returned to the crew's mess.

The following day Forbes was transferred to the crew's service. Most of the men welcomed him. George Eggles, a member of the engine gang, however, did not share the general sentiment.

"I can't see why they have to take niggers aboard these ships at all," he complained to Billy. "It only makes trouble. There's plenty of white men now could sail as messmen."

Billy reacted angrily.

"Lay off that kind of talk, Eggles," he said. "We don't like it."

Eggles snorted.

"Who's we?" he said contemptuously. "A couple of Com-mies?"

Then he glanced about the table to find all pairs of eyes fastened on him, most of them unfriendly. He said no more, but finished his meal and quit the messroom.

Forbes became something of a hero to the sailors. He would visit the fo'c's'le to help students of navigation solve problems out of *Bowditch*, *Cugles and Dutton's*.<sup>59</sup> He also told them a great deal about the '21 strike and what had happened to the seamen as a result of the union's being crushed.

From Forbes, Billy learned much more about the Negroes in the industry.

"Most of us have stuck to the union through everything," the messman said proudly. "And I reckon we've been kicked around the most of anybody. One of these days there'll be a

real organization and we'll be a part of it. The white seamen have got to find out that there's no strength in a segregated union<sup>60</sup>—no matter if it's by color or craft."

The *Ex-Call's* trip took six months. In mid-November the ship reached New Jersey.

\* \* \*

To Billy Farrell it seemed as if 1934 had brought a change to the New York waterfront.

Returning from the Near East voyage in April, he left the *Ex-Call* and took an active part in the struggle to organize the unorganized in maritime.

Shipping no longer was at a total standstill in the port. Some docks were busy and traffic in the harbor was greater than it had been at any time since 1929. While unemployment was still widespread, government bureaus were beginning to function. Now, however, the hungry people from last year's breadlines wrestled desperately with the red tape<sup>61</sup> involved in obtaining relief.

Hunger marches, death watches, and all forms of mass demonstrations became the order of the day, as the depression moved into its fourth year in America.

With the rest of the Communists in New York, Billy took his place on the relief picket lines, carrying signs demanding jobs and unemployment insurance. Each day his personal anger against a system that scorned the desperate needs of the people grew. The sight of a cop put him into a fighting frame of mind.

With Ferris he often would talk about the changes socialism would bring to America. They would sit in a coffeehouse late at night after a meeting, adding details to the picture.

"Everything's ready for it in this country," the Italian seaman would declare emphatically, waving his hand in a gesture that took in the whole country. "A worker's life in a socialist America could be one hell of a swell proposition. The factories are there, all built. The resources are enormous and well developed. We've got railroads and ships and air-

planes. Nothing's missing except the kind of government that would make these things go. Why, we could make unemployment and depression seem like a bad dream in no time. My God, man, ain't it crazy to let a few greedy bastards spoil a thing like that?"

In May, 1934, the West Coast longshoremen struck for better wages and working conditions. The newspapers raised the Red scare, crying "REVOLUTION IN SAN FRANCISCO!" The AFL<sup>62</sup> maritime leadership blasted the strike as "Commie" and insisted, upon threat of reprisal, that none of their members support it.

At the headquarters of the Marine Workers Industrial Union on South Street, however, men were jubilant. Al Ferris and the other union leaders hailed this strike as the first break in a swelling movement from below—a movement that would unshackle the marine workers from the primitive conditions of the industry and raise them to a level of human dignity.

During 1934 the MWIU on the East Coast reached a peak membership of ten thousand, while the AFL union had on its books only two thousand names.

Both the shipowners and the government betrayed uneasiness at the rise in union sentiment, while the fakers at the head of the International Seamen's Union badgered the company for contracts. Their strong point of argument was that if the operators did not deal with them, the rank and file union was sure to move into a position of power.

The operators and government leaders did not understand what the depression years had done to the American working class. AFL officials were booed and hissed when they made their rare appearances on the front.

Billy teamed up with Al to organize support for the West Coast strike where AFL seamen had overridden their leaders and joined the longshoremen.

In New York harbor Billy fought his way aboard ships to talk with crews, urging them to pile off in San Francisco

and join the strike. Every day the number of struck ships in the 'Frisco harbor increased.

Boarding ships was not always easy. Billy sometimes would hail a truck bound for the dock where a vessel was tied up.

The MWIU hall was the scene of constant meetings in support of the West Coast strike. Sailors who had come ashore holding heavy for the first time in years gave whole pay days to the support fund.

At the waterfront section of the Communist Party, long-shore comrades come with dozens of their fellow workers who had read in the boss press that the San Francisco strike was a Commie deal. They wanted to find out how to organize the same kind of action in New York, where the shape-up system of hiring kept them penniless and uncertain of work.

Billy laughed at the fine organizing job the press was doing for the Communist Party. "The whole damn world's looking at San Francisco," he said to Beans. "And we're getting the credit."

Beans grinned wryly. "It's called digging their own grave," he observed. "If they just keep on yelling 'Communist' at all the workers who go on strike, they're going to build us the biggest mass party the world has ever seen."

For the sixty-four days that the strike in 'Frisco lasted, Billy slept a maximum of four hours a night. He had taken a room on West Twenty-third Street, a dismal looking stall with ragged linoleum on the floor and limp curtains on the one narrow window. But a bed was a bed. He had no time to feel unhappy about his dwelling place.

Early every morning he was on the front, talking to seamen in bars, coffeepots, on the docks and aboardships. Every day more men joined the MWIU. Billy gained dignity and self-respect in the struggle in which he had been an active participant.

The West Coast strike ended in July. On the New York waterfront the militants celebrated. In the government

award<sup>63</sup> which concluded the strike was the promise of the union hiring hall, an end to the humiliating shape-up system. And in the organized strength of a tested rank and file, which had refused to yield even under gun fire, lay the assurance that the improvements won would become a reality.

\* \* \*

Then Billy found Mary O'Connell.

He ran into her on Madison Avenue one evening when he was returning from a flagpole job. Without waiting for her to pass him, Billy stepped up to her and held out his hand.

Neither spoke for a moment. They stood in the middle of the busy sidewalk, looking at each other. In Mary's eyes was the blur of sudden tears. Billy said to himself. "Here is my girl. This is my girl."

"Can't we even have a drink together?" he asked.

She smiled and took his hand.

"Of course we can, Billy."

They found a bar where he could enter in his work clothes and they settled in a booth to talk. But words came hard. All the things that Billy had dreamed of saying to this girl, the angry things and the pleading ones and the plain outpouring of his heart, were gone from his mind.

"You still on the *Rita*?" he asked finally.

Mary shook her head.

"I got off the trip after you did, Billy, the chief steward tried to make us report anyone who talked union to the girls." She smiled ruefully. "I don't belong to any union, Billy, and I don't believe in them even, but I want you to know I'm not a stool pigeon. A couple of us got off together. I've been sailing on the *Sabina*. We're leaving the day after tomorrow. What about you, Billy? What are you doing dressed like that?"

Billy glanced down at his paint-splattered clothes.

"Temporarily in the contracting business," ma'am," he grinned. "We paint flagpoles, my partner and I. Want to come in with us?"

Mary smiled again.

"But why, Billy?" she asked.

"Well, Mary," he replied, "maybe you won't like it any better now than you did a year and a half ago, but I'm staying ashore because of a thing called union. I paint flagpoles a couple a days a week and agitate seamen on the front the rest of the time."

He paused and looked directly at her.

"There's no sense in my kidding around with you, Mary. When I last saw you I was just kind of a deep pink, but now I'm redder than your lipstick. That's the way it is, kid. If you can't take it, just say so."

Mary took another sip of her drink.

"I'm not fool enough to think I can change you," she replied slowly. "And maybe I wouldn't if I could. There are lots of things I don't understand and don't agree with. But one thing I do know, you're honest, and that chief steward wasn't. I'll see you, Billy, no matter what kind of ideas you have."

Outside they separated. Billy went downtown to change his clothes. Mary said she would wait in her room uptown for him to call.

His feet almost danced on the pavement. He wanted to laugh out loud and sing.

"I've found her," he told himself jubilantly, then didn't believe it.

They had dinner at a little French restaurant and later went to a movie. Then, disregarding the chill in the air, they walked the long distance to Mary's house, holding hands and talking, trying to cover the space of one and a half years.

Billy told Mary about his trips to the Near East and she described a visit to her family in California. Her parents

could not understand why their Mary, whom they thought so wonderful, had not yet got herself a husband but must go on working so hard for a living. Mary squeezed Billy's hand.

"Do you know why I haven't got married, Billy?"

He waited for her to talk on.

"Is this true?" he wondered. "Is it Mary beside me, and is she telling me I'm all right for her?"

"It was because of you, Billy," she said in her candid manner. "Before I met you, I guess I was waiting for you. And after that crazy trip on the *Rita* I still was waiting for you, and mad at myself because of it . . ."

At the rooming house door, he kissed her good night.

"We'll figure it out, kid," he promised.

That night, however, he scarcely slept, worrying about how he could ask Mary to marry him. Mary was not a Communist. Anyway, he could not see her off to Chile while he went to Le Havre. What a dizzy life it was. Even going to sea he couldn't make a living for two

And more than anything now, even more than marrying Mary O'Connell, he meant to continue his work on the waterfront.

Where was the answer? he wondered, tossing about on his pillow.

Early the next morning he went uptown to take Mary to breakfast. Fresh from sleep she looked more radiant than ever.

"I guess there are better-looking women," he thought. "But I'll be damned if anyone else looks good to me."

They ate at an automat on upper Broadway.

"I wish I could think, Mary," Billy said. "I've been awake all night trying to dope out a way to get married. I can't ask a girl like you to live in a furnished room," he went on ruefully. "And I haven't got a right to ask you to wait for me. It's murder, this love business for a sailor."

Mary sat quietly, waiting for him to finish.

"But I mean to wait for you, Billy," she told him, "whether you ask me to or not."



After breakfast they walked in Central Park. It was a crisp fair morning, a singing kind of morning. Billy and Mary were buoyantly happy. Mary recalled with a laugh the last time they had walked together in Guayaquil.

"It was so hot and you talked so strange," she said. "And yet, Billy, I knew even then that you were the man."

Billy put his arm around her in broad daylight while elderly people sitting on the park benches smiled tolerantly.

"You bet I'm the man, Mary," he said with conviction.

He thought that he should be on the front right now, contacting sailors.

There were a number of large ships in the harbor this week and crews were signing up right and left. Instead of going downtown, however, he wanted to continue this aimless happy walk in the park.

"Let's go to my place, Billy," Mary said suddenly. They walked back to her rooming house.

Mary's room was just another small chintz-covered cubbyhole. Her belongings were scattered over the walls and floor—a llama rug from Peru and butterfly wing trays from Brazil. Billy laughed when he saw them.

"Just like all the other scenery bums," he teased her.

Mary got out a small electric burner and put coffee in a percolator. She moved efficiently and Billy watched her with pleasure. While the coffee was cooking he halted her suddenly and pulled her down next to him on the narrow daybed.

"I'll do whatever you say, Mary," he whispered. "But on this waiting thing, is it absolutely necessary?"

Mary put her arms about him and held him close.

"I didn't say we had to wait, Billy," she replied softly.

Later, drinking the overdone coffee, Billy said, "We can still make it down to City Hall,<sup>65</sup> Mary, if that would make you feel better about this."

"Who said I felt bad?" she asked. "Next trip will do. If you like, I'll call you my husband from this moment on." She laughed. "Mary Farrell—that's a nice name, Billy."

Billy rested his head against the back of his chair and closed his eyes.

"Mary, Mary," he said, "is it really coming true, you and me?"

She bent over and kissed him.

"It's already true, Billy," she said.

\* \* \*

Billy Farrell found the New York waterfront a hotbed of union talk when the *Susan Carter* docked in June, 1935.

The newspapers talked as if the depression had passed. If there was recovery, it was not apparent on the waterfront. The docks still swarmed with unemployed. At the longshore shape-ups, three times a day, there still were ten men for every job called.

One phase of the depression, however, definitely had passed. That was the period of apathy. Men now were fighting for jobs.

Billy paid off the ship and went looking for Al Ferris. Billy was anxious to know how the rank and file leadership operated and what part the party was playing in things.

"Well," said Al, "we're a force, but we're not the whole works and we don't aim to be. This union movement is a big, broad business, and the broader it gets the better. You take our steering committee here in New York. I'm on it, but I'm the only Communist who is. Two of the others think more or less like we do, but the other five don't at all. So what? we're out to make this union function as a union should. We'll work with everyone who agrees on that. So long as he's for the membership, so long as he seems honest and takes a stand for democracy, then we figure that we can get along with him. We have to if the rank and file is to win."

After eating, Billy went to a phone booth and called Mary's house. While the landlady went to call her, he wondered why he had not tried to reach her first, before contact-

ing Al Ferris. It had not occurred to him to do so, even though he had been longing for her for six months.

"I guess it's because one thing is struggle and the other is personal," he thought, and wondered if she would understand that she came second on the list and probably always would. "The thing has nothing at all to do with how much you love a woman," he reflected.

He heard Mary's voice on the wire.

"I've been waiting for you to call," she said. "I rang the company and found out that your ship was due in today."

The sound of her voice brought the vision of her face before Billy.

"When can I see you?" he asked anxiously.

Mary laughed.

"What do you mean, when can you see me? You're to bring your things and come here, Billy. This is your home until we get a better one."

Billy sighed with relief and then laughed with excitement.

"Home to Mary," he thought. "God, that sounds good." There would be no having to wait until he could afford an apartment in Queens,<sup>66</sup> no demands of the kind he could not meet.

Mary met him at the door. She was rigged in a blue something that was half a dress and half a robe.

"Do you know this is my first homecoming?" he said, as he took hold of her. The pressure of her body was almost more than he could bear. "Six months!" he whispered. "Hell, that was six years."

They talked late into the night. Mary said her voyage had been a rough one. The girls on the *Sabina* were kicked around. When they tried to send a representative to the captain, the chief steward had cracked down, saying he was their representative and that anyone who didn't like it could leave the ship.

Mary was fighting a losing battle against sleep. Suddenly she remembered another thing to tell Billy.

"It's about the union," she said drowsily. "I joined it, Billy."

Billy laughed out loud in the darkness.

"You did, kid, honest?" he said. "For Billy's sake."

Mary corrected him in a sleepy voice.

"For my own sake."

Billy tightened his embrace.

"Good girl," he whispered.

In the morning they had an early breakfast at the automat. Mary was due on her ship at noon.

"We're sailing early tomorrow," she said. "I was going to leave the ship, but I don't think I'd better. If I got off now the chief steward would think it was because I was afraid of him. It might have a bad effect on the rest of the girls."

Billy looked depressed. Then his face brightened.

"It's nine o'clock," he said suddenly. "Let's go downtown and get married while I still have two bucks for the license."

Mary put down her coffee cup. She looked as if she might cry.

"It's not the way I used to dream of getting married, Billy," she murmured. "But I guess it's the right way for us to do it."

On the way to the Municipal Building in the subway, Billy looked alarmed.

"What about a ring?" he asked.

Mary pulled off her glove and removed a signet ring from the third finger of the right hand.

"We'll switch this to the other hand," she said with a smile. "You can get me a real wedding ring later."

Billy held her hand tight in his.

"I never thought I'd want to get hooked," he declared.

At the Municipal Building, Mary and Billy bought their license and were married in the little chapel by the justice on duty. Another couple served as witnesses for them. The

judge's voice was toneless. The ceremony seemed unreal to Billy. He glanced at Mary's glowing face.

"But she's real," he told himself. "And she's my wife."

It was after eleven o'clock when Mary and Billy Farrell left the Municipal Building and crossed to City Hall park. They walked arm in arm in the sunshine, watching the pigeons and the people.

"Shouldn't we go have a glass of champagne or something?" Billy asked.

Mary shook her head.

"It's almost time for me to be back aboardship."

Billy escorted his wife to the Cass Line pier, now located on the West Side of Manhattan.

"When this thing in the union gets straightened out so a sailor can choose his run," he said in parting, "I'll get me a steady go to the Gulf and maybe you can take a shoreside job."

Mary observed him thoughtfully, smiling.

"And when this union thing gets straightened, out there will be something else again, Billy," she said wisely. "I don't know much about your work yet, but I think I've begun to understand you."

"And it's okay by you?"

She nodded and pressed his arm.

"It's okay, Billy, honest. I'll try not to be a drag."

\* \*

Police terror took a sharp increase as the strike entered its second month. Cops on horseback and motorcycles charged into picket lines and injuries were commonplace.

The Communist *Daily Worker* was the only newspaper in the city which was not hostile to the striking seamen. In the *Daily* the strike was headline news and front-page editorials urged support for the seamen. The picketing sailors, angered by the lies in the general press, welcomed the aid given them by the Communist paper.

By mid-April the picket lines began to thin out, as strikers became disheartened and returned to the ships. Despite the valiant efforts of shoreside friends to supply funds and food, the housing and eating facilities were growing short.

The strike was going to end soon and they all knew it, including Ferris.

Mary's ship came in the last week in April. Billy rushed to the Cass Line pier, only to find his wife already on the picket line. She marched with dignity and pride, carrying a sign which read: "My Wages Are \$40 a Month. Do You Think That's Enough?"

When she saw Billy she held the placard higher and waved it.

Billy pulled her out of the line and hugged her.

"Gee, kid, I thought you never were coming in," he said.

"Hey, Farrell," one of the picketing sailors yelled. "Don't come around here disrupting our formation. Give us back the lady for the line!"

Mary remained on the picket line until late in the afternoon, then met Billy at strike headquarters. The hall was crowded, dirty, and noisy, but she seemed to feel at home there. She greeted a number of sailors from the Cass Lines.

Billy introduced Mary to Al Ferris. Al shook hands with her and showed his teeth in a huge grin.

"I ought to be sick of your name," he told her. "I've been hearing nothing but 'Mary, Mary,' ever since I got to know your old man." He turned to Billy. "Why don't you shove?"<sup>67</sup> he asked. "You can skip the six o'clock meeting and we'll see you in the morning."

He gave Farrell a push in the direction of the door.

"And get rid of that beard before she leaves you," he warned.

\* \* \*

Two days later Billy marched with the Provisional Committee at the head of the striking seamen in the big May Day parade. Crowds of workers lined the sidewalks and cheered the sailors as they went by.

The experience thrilled Billy Farrell. The big turnout and the spirit of the event made him feel strong and ready for anything. It seemed to him that there were millions of people in Union Square when he and the rest of the seamen marched past the cheering grandstand. He felt as if the whole world was behind the strike.

On the waterfront the next day, however, the bitter realities were only too apparent. The strike was petering out. The ships were leaving the harbor in increasing numbers, many of them with full crews.

Two weeks later, the Provisional Strike Committee issued a statement of policy, urging the seamen to return to the ships and carry the struggle forward on the job.

"Form ship's committees aboard every vessel," the statement advised. "Above all, raise the demand that all replacements must come through the union hall."

The Provisional Committee then disbanded and a Seamen's Defense Committee was established.

The function of the Defense Committee was to carry on the work of the rank and file organization. It fought attempts of company and union officials to blackball strikers. The rank and file organization went to court against the union officials. It demanded an accounting of ISU funds and constitutional changes to protect the interests of the membership.

Billy Farrell was one of hundreds of sailors who registered for shipping at the ISU hall. The boycott of company-offices was so widespread that the operators were forced to call the union for replacements.

He made<sup>68</sup> the *African Trader*, scheduled for a London run. Mary remained ashore. Billy said goodbye to her early one morning.

Aboard the *Trader*, Billy found that the strike had won some concessions, even if they were not officially admitted by the company. Some improvements had taken place on the job, as the ship's officers recognized and dealt with the ship's committee.

The *Trader* carried a good crew. Discussions raged from morning until night about the future of the union.

The ship's committee held regular meetings, tackling all grievances. The first week out the committee succeeded in getting the hours of work cut considerably.

When she docked in New York in July, 1936, the ship's crew waited for a patrolman from the Seamen's Defense Committee to come aboard and settle their grievances. Instead, an ISU man marched into the mess room and set up for bookkeeping.

The deadline came September 30. As had been rumored, the West Coast operators walked out of negotiations, refusing to consider the joint demands of the seamen and longshoremen, and declared an official lockout from Vancouver Canada, to San Diego, California.

"That this is going to be a tough battle we know," wired the longshore leader. "The lockout is the owner's program for breaking up the unions altogether, on both coasts. If the men on the East Coast don't support our fight, we will be smashed and you will be smashed with us!"

Torrens, President of the Seamen's Defense Committee, read the telegram to an emergency meeting of the Defense Committee. This moment was one they had been expecting since July. Billy thought with relief that the Atlantic and Gulf seamen were in better shape for strike action now than they had been last spring. Now they knew what a union must be, and to a man they wanted one.

Torrens asked, "Well, how shall we answer this?"

"Shall we issue a call to strike?" he wanted to know.

Billy asked for the floor.

"How about trying to get the officials to issue the call?" he suggested.

The message was drafted and dispatched immediately. The union's officers did not reply to it, but an interesting result was obtained nevertheless. Late that same day the ISU



called a mass meeting of all seamen at Cooper Union Hall, "to discuss the issues brought about by the lockout on the West Coast."

The meeting took place the following night. Thousands of sailors, stewards, and firemen, from ships all over the port, hot for action, crowded into the hall. All eyes were focused on the officials who drank water and nervously paced the dais.

David Plange, head of the Stewards Division, a pompous-looking individual with a ribbon streamer hanging from his glasses, called the meeting to order in a sonorous voice. The decision which the officers of the union had reached, he declared, was that "we should not go on strike on this coast, for our own representatives are now entering negotiations with the operators and we have no justification for taking action until we have the results of those negotiations."

There was a pause while the heavy silence of the audience bore threateningly against the chair.

"We will, however, consider moral support to the West Coast unions," Plange added. "But absolutely and finally, no economic action."

The chairman had scarcely finished speaking when the protest rose. It came from all corners of the big hall.

"How the hell do you think our own negotiations will go if we scab on the West Coast?" a voice demanded sharply.

"What's the crap about moral support?" yelled another. "What the hell good is that?"

"Hey, what are you guys trying to pull on us?" cried a third. "There won't be any contract for us and there won't be any union either if Bridges loses out west."

The ISU official, having made his pronouncement, moved to end the discussion. Plange banged for order, declared the meeting adjourned, and warned the men in the hall to return to their ships. Then, with the angry taunts of the members ringing in their ears, the officials walked out of the hall.

Not a seaman followed them.

"Let's get down to business!" someone shouted.

"Bring in the Seamen's Defense Committee!" another cried.

- A group of sailors went outside to escort the leaders of the rank and file to the platform. They had been barred from the meeting by the officials. The audience cheered as they entered.

A chairman was named, and the meeting resumed.

That night the rank and file of the ISU drafted a statement of their own, calling upon all East Coast seamen to pile off the ships in support of their West Coast brothers, and demanding the same conditions for themselves.

The meeting in Cooper Union decided the fate of the ISU officials. From that moment on the union belonged lock, stock and barrel<sup>69</sup> to the rank and file, who gave evidence that they were ready to fight for it.

When at last the meeting disbanded, the Seamen's Defense Committee went into session until daybreak, planning strike strategy and organizing committees for the action into which they had plunged.

This time the strike was not confined to the port of New-York.

The following day, from Portland, Maine, to Corpus Christi, Texas, the reports rolled into headquarters. The Atlantic and Gulf seamen were all out. The ports were as tight as drums.<sup>70</sup> The rank and file organization at last had come into its own.

Despite stronger organization, the fall and winter strike of 1936-37 brought bitter hardships to the East Coast waterfront.

The machine-bound AFL continued to knife the maritime workers. Central labor bodies in all coast towns refused to aid and sponsor the strike, and the AFL executive council, sitting comfortably in session in Miami, Florida, declared it an "outlaw action."

Terror was widespread. Men were dragged from picket lines at night, their heads bashed in by goons.<sup>71</sup>

In New York the cold was intense. Almost as many strikers went to Bellevue Hospital with pneumonia as went to jail. Death became a commonplace.

Billy Farrell, Al Ferris, and the other leaders of the strike, slept in their clothes in any room handy. They saw their wives when the girls came to the picket line or visited strike headquarters. Living became a great blur of action. No day passed without the introduction of some new and serious problems.

As in the spring strike, the Communist Party was one of the most vital supporters of the maritime struggle. The embattled seamen had been red-baited beyond meaning. They accepted aid from the "real" Reds with new understanding.

Billy Farrell became one of the best known of the strike leaders. As weary as he often felt, the comradeship of men on strike proved more stimulating than sleep. The more difficulties rose, the harder he and the others tackled them, and the more confidence they gained in the power of the men to win.

Despite all provocations and hardships, the winter strike remained solid. When the ISU officials negotiated a ten dollar wage increase as a means of luring men back to the ships, the strikers shook their heads grimly and remained on the picket lines.

One sailor made up a song about the wage lure, terming the ten dollar bill "another thirty pieces of silver." The pickets sang it loudly, marching against the weather.

The striking seamen became a vital part of the national battle for industrial organization. In Detroit the auto workers were sitting in the factories, as unyielding to force and red-baiting as the sailors. In Akron, Ohio, the rubber workers sat down to build a union. In Pittsburgh steel workers were in revolt against the craft union bureaucracy.

This was the era of the great sitdown strike.<sup>72</sup>

In February, 1937, the lockout on the West Coast ended. The wage demands of the seamen and longshoremen were granted. The victory belonged to the East Coast as well. By striking in support of the Pacific workers, they had unlocked the door to national maritime organization.

On the New York waterfront the seamen celebrated joyfully.

Two days after the strike ended, Billy became a casualty. He collapsed at a meeting and was taken home in a taxi.

For a week he was delirious. Mary's voice came through occasionally, only to be blotted out by a roar like the sound of subway construction.

ISU officials and cops on horseback peopled his wild dreams. The wind blew bitter and cold along the North River. He marched into it, to be engulfed in sweat. Bayonets and rubber hoses and the hard hoofs of a cop's mount came into play against him as he tried to beat back attacks.

After an eternity of madness, peace came suddenly. Billy slept without dreaming. When he awoke, Mary was sitting beside him, smiling.

"Hello, skeleton," she greeted him. "Drink this."

She held a cup to his lips. The broth was hot and pleasant. He tried to drink rapidly, but his lips wouldn't function. He felt as weak as a cat. Mary let his head fall back upon the pillow.

"The doctor said you wouldn't get well, but I didn't believe him," she said. She was still smiling, but her eyes were bright with tears. "You wouldn't be mean enough to pull out on me, Billy, would you?"

Billy pushed his hand weakly into hers.

"I'm sticking with you, baby," he tried to say. But the words did not come through.

During the days that followed Mary nursed him as if he were a child. When he felt sufficiently alive to wonder what was going on in the world, he asked for newspapers. His

wife refused to supply them. Instead, she read aloud stories from Bret Harte and Jack London.

When he demanded to know what was happening downtown, Mary shook her head.

"Everything is just fine," she assured him. "Keep your nose out of things that don't concern you."

When Billy grew strong enough to venture out of the house, the two walked once more in Central Park, sitting for hours in the spring sunshine. They had lunch at the terrace overlooking the Zoo.

Billy watched the seals with as much enjoyment as the kids who screamed with delight when the animals plopped into the water and rose from it again.

"Remember Seal Rock in 'Frisco?" he asked Mary. "I used to wish I was one of those fellows, lying there in the sun with nothing to worry about."

Mary sighed.

"San Francisco seems a long way back to me, Billy. Do you think we'll ever go there together?"

Billy grinned.

"We've got a honeymoon coming to us, Mrs. Farrell. What say we take it on the Cass Line intercoastal, sailing under union conditions?"

Mary nodded.

"That would be nice," she agreed with a smile. "But I know what would happen. At the last minute you wouldn't sign on because of something that happened ashore. And there I'd be on our honeymoon, all by myself."

Billy felt completely happy during these convalescent days. He and Mary were constantly together for the first time since they had known each other. They built a future full of kids and friends.

Mary had stopped working at the restaurant when Billy took sick.

"If you don't mind my asking, just what are we living on?" he demanded one day.

"On my savings, of course," Mary replied. "What did you think?"

Billy frowned.

"But that's lousy, Mary. I don't want to use up your dough."

She put her hand across his mouth.

"When do men stop being superior beings, Billy? I used to think you were kind of smart, but you still haven't learned one little thing. That is, that when people are teamed up everything they have is theirs together."

\* \* \*

Billy took his post as Sailors' Trustee on the District Committee the following week. He found the pressure on the front as heavy as it had been at any moment during the strike.

The rank and file had become the union. Seamen were being dispatched to ships for jobs from the Eleventh Avenue hall. The activities of the organization had multiplied.

Things began to happen fast. The rank and file seamen appealed to the newly formed National Labor Relations Board for an industry-wide election to determine the bargaining agent for the seamen. They appeared on the ballot against the ISU as the "National Maritime Union."

The next big event in the lives of the East Coast seamen was the first convention of the new union. Its purpose was to draft a constitution and prepare a working agreement which would be acceptable to all in the trade.

The convention was held in New York City, July, 1937.

Billy Farrell was one of eighteen seamen elected from the port of New York to attend the convention. He took his place among the 219 delegates, the majority of whom had come from ships representing all companies in the industry.

The majority of the delegates were on their toes, hot to defend the interests of the seamen. They listened and talked and rejected every phony proposal raised. At last they put

together a constitution that had no match on the American labor scene—a program for free men.

The weary, exuberant NMU delegates withdrew from convention July 30 to return to their ships and ports.

Billy found Al Ferris in the crowd. The two left the hall together, walking into the heat of West 34th Street where throngs of excited, jubilant seamen continued the discussions of the convention. Men were hugging one another, and some were crying.

Ferris kept punching Billy's arm.

"You buin," he said over and over. "Did you ever think we'd live to see this day? Did you?"

At the corner they separated, each to find his wife and take a day away from the front before the next big phase of the struggle began—the establishment of the new union as the bargaining agent for the industry.

Ferris gave Farrell some parting advice.

"Take it easy there, bud," he said affectionately. "We need every ounce of strength for what's ahead. Whatever you think we've been through the past year, it's small potatoes to what's coming. This isn't the end of the fight, it's just the start. Now our real headaches will begin."

*Phillip Bonosky*

## ONE OF THE TWELVE

I hurried through the streets on my way to meet a man. A radio, in the crisp voice of an anonymous speaker, cried: "Spy... spy... Communist... spy..." Around me men and women, the gray stain of the secret and fearful anxiety of our times washed through their faces and isolated in their eyes, carried newspapers, and the huge black headlines, again and again. And again, as I turned the corner and almost fell into the arms of a man holding a magazine. A truck going by, carrying a huge placard. There again "Spy... Communist... spy..." And again, as I walked; and all around me, again and again.

I hurried on that calm September morning. Children were going to school. There was that hint of haze in the air which, in the country, hangs across the sun and lies half-shining across the pear and apple trees. One longed to surrender to the peace and languor of the day; sighed, as if this were a lost dream, for the memory of simplicity; a home, work, family... I wanted to reach out into the crowd, to any of the frightened people who hurried by with their eyes averted from the headlines on the newsstands, take anyone I could touch by the hand and say, Come, come with me; I want you to meet somebody....

I was going to see a man named Gus Hall; he is the state chairman of the Communist Party of Ohio, one of the



twelve members of the National Committee of the Communist Party indicted by a grand jury<sup>1</sup> for conspiring to teach. . .

It hardly matters what the indictment says. Nobody really cares what it says, nobody believes it, least of all those who drew it up. They have other reasons, and their game is bigger: to steal the freedom of the American people, first, and then the world.

I had seen Gus Hall only once before. He had just been mustered out of the Navy, and there he was, still in his blue uniform, poking a fire at the back of a cold meeting hall in Cleveland. It was the spring of 1946, I believe. But the most remarkable thing about him at that time was the enormous handle-bar<sup>2</sup> mustache he had grown in the Navy and brought home with him, his only trophy from the war.

But memory never shaves a face. "What ever became of that wonderful handle bar?" I demanded abruptly. For instead of the mustache I remembered was a conventional little two-incher.

"Shaved it off," he said with just a touch of regret and a smile.

I got the vital statistics from him at once. Date of birth: October 8, 1910. Place of birth: Iron, Minnesota. Parentage: Finnish-American. Schooling: left school after the eighth grade to work. Married, two children. Work record: lumber-jack<sup>3</sup> at the age of 15; railroad; bummed about the country in his teens going where the climate fit his clothes; steel worker, organizer, Communist . .

"You're not going to tell me you were born in a log cabin, too, by any chance, now are you?"

A slow smile began to spread over his face. "Well," he said, "as a matter of fact I was. Dad was an expert carpenter and built the cabin I was born in."

We sat in the little room and shook with laughter for a whole minute. Somehow I felt I was losing the point of my interview. Here, simply, was a man who had spent his whole life fighting the battles of the underdog,<sup>4</sup> because he himself

was one; he fought them well and with vision. Period. One wanted to shake hands and go home. If truth were its own witness, this would be enough. I would not be writing this article. Instead, I have to prove the obvious. I have to show that a man, Gus Hall, is just what his life is: open, honest, militant, incorruptible. Everyone who has met him personally knows this—including his enemies and those who lie about him.

In any case, even if I wasn't there to get the facts I would have stayed to hear the details of this man's life. For he added: "Not only that," tasting the humor of it, "some time ago, an amateur photographer took some pictures of that cabin—and those photographs of my birthplace won prizes all over the country and in South America, too."

It struck me as bizarre that perhaps the same good people who were sent into a cold sweat by the press stories of American Communists' intentions (it's always in the future!) might have lingered sentimentally over that photograph of a cabin in which an American Communist leader was born.

In our talk Gus mentioned his father frequently and eagerly and with obvious pride. For his father, Matt, had been active practically his entire life in the labor movement. He had been a friend of Big Bill Haywood,<sup>5</sup> back in those turbulent I.W.W. days; he was a miner who had worked in coal and iron, had led attempts to organize the miners into a union and had been blacklisted for thirty years as a result. Thirty years! And it was only during the war that he was called back again—and now he was sixty-eight years old.

Both Matt and his wife were charter members of the Communist Party—that fledgling party which was hounded immediately by Attorney-General Palmer<sup>6</sup> with the crude but effective assistance of the then apprentice-in-frameups, J. Edgar Hoover.<sup>7</sup>

Gus was one of ten children, and life was no merry-go-round for the children of a man who was hounded by the

great mining corporations and their hundreds of hirelings as Gus himself was later to be hounded and framed by them and their sons. His father built a home out of the wilderness with his own hands, and added more space to the cabin as more children were born.

"We lived in semi-starvation," Gus said simply.

Sometimes a father will say to his son, "My way was hard, and I want you to take an easier way." But Gus's assignment in life was no easy one. He stood on the shoulders of his father, and perhaps that is why, so young, he could see so much farther than men three times his age. For at fifteen he was doing a man's work, as a lumberjack, for the Backus & Brooks Lumber Company, at \$32 a month, and he was organizing at the same time. Conditions of labor were brutal. The men lived in bare barracks and were completely at the mercy of the company, which kept an eye sleeplessly peeled on rebels—which meant just about everyone. The blacklist was long and notorious, and out in the woods anything could happen to a man.

Still, young Gus pitched in to organize men old enough to be his father. The Young Communist League, which was active there in northern Minnesota and to which he had attached himself (he was still too young to be a member), gave him the assignment of building the union. He did a good job. When he became a full-fledged member, the Y.C.L. sent him on a speaking tour. "I made my first speech about then," he said, wryly. "Never made a speech in my life before. My first speech was two minutes long—and, after that, I've been increasing them ever since. . ."

He floated logs down the river, was a four-horse skinner at \$45 a month, spoke for and helped build the Y.C.L. obviously a boy to be watched. Eyes were on him: the bosses' and, what was more important the workers'.

There was a restless period, however, in his teens when he went on the bum—moved about the country by freight, absorbing it, seeing how the people lived, discovering that he was legion. It was on the back of the worker that the coun-

try rested—everywhere men were sweating and everywhere others profited from that sweat. This simple truth was taught to young Gus by those two remorseless instructors: hunger and unemployment.

From this period until the Little Steel Strike in 1937, life moved rapidly for Gus Hall. His next assignment was as organizer on the famous Mesabi Range, the richest iron ore deposits, private property of U.S. Steel. This was in 1928-29; and here he was arrested for the first time for leading an anti-war demonstration. Dozens of high school kids, who listened to him and watched the arrest protested—kept on protesting over Hall's own protests, for they could have been expelled from school. The cops beat them with clubs and hustled them to jail after Gus. They came into the jailhouse with noses streaming scarlet and blood caking their hair and their shirts torn and that stunned look that comes when young Americans get a sudden glimpse of the iron fist behind I-pledge-allegiance-with-liberty-and-justice-for-all.<sup>8</sup> (How many of them are dead now, on what Pacific shore?)

Then the storm cloud that had slowly been growing from a speck on the horizon in the high-noon days of prosperity broke, and the storm flooded the country. In Germany finance-capital hoisted a signpainter<sup>9</sup> onto the stage. The Reichstag Fire was lit; Dachau and Buchenwald loomed in the shadows. The accused Communist, Dimitrov, stripped the stage armor from the strutting Goering. The frame-up was exposed.

Roosevelt was in the White House. Hoovervilles<sup>10</sup> still dotted the country, an army was on the move by freight, living in jungle camps beside the road at night, eating slumgullion from tin cans.<sup>11</sup> Men, women, children. The Mellons, Weirs, Morgans quaked: a new force was arising. Labor was slowly beginning to snap the bonds that had kept it hobbled for two decades. On Park Avenue the dowagers stocked their cellars with food in case the mob came north from Union

Square where Foster and Amter and Minor spoke to thousands.

From the ranks of the unemployed, fighting for bread, rose the Communists—men like Gus Hall. In 1932, he was leading an unemployed demonstration in Minneapolis that “took over” the city hall<sup>12</sup> and sent shivers down the backs of the rich. Bread was won.

In 1934, the famous Minneapolis Teamsters Strike<sup>13</sup> broke out; Gus Hall led the most decisive part of that struggle. It was bitter and brutal, approaching the conditions of open warfare. Thousands of thugs were recruited from all over the country, equipped with deputy badges,<sup>14</sup> clubs and guns, and then turned loose against the strikers. They swaggered about town in stormtrooper style<sup>15</sup> “until”, says Gus grimly, “the men couldn’t take it any more. They went to work themselves. Never saw such a shellacking of police in my life—they were running all over the city throwing their badges away.” He smiled nostalgically.

C.I.O., the Committee for Industrial Organization, staff member Hall’s job was to organize the steel workers in the Republic mills at Warren and Niles, Ohio. Only shreds of organization existed there—the Amalgamated Association of Iron, Steel and Tin Workers, A.F. of L.

Tom Girdler became president of Republic Steel at about this time. His name lives in infamy, connected forever with the Memorial Day Massacre in Chicago in 1937.<sup>16</sup> And here in Niles and Warren, this shrewd, hardbitten corporation boss was pitted with all his goons, hired police, tear-gas, strikebreakers, labor spies, police clubs and guns, against the courage and skill of this young man, only twenty-seven years old, whose job was to help wrench loose the workers from the murderous grip of this steel baron. In his autobiography, *Boots and Straps*, Tom Girdler describes the campaign to organize his plants as an invasion of Communists and other men, “probably Italian”, with dark faces. His

story is the story of "staunch Americanism facing off the invasion of a foreign horde."

The men of Republic worked in conditions of virtual peonage<sup>17</sup> in these small company towns on the flatlands of Ohio. Tom Girdler proposed and disposed for them. Their only fear was not unionization — but if it failed! Reprisals. Blacklists. Nevertheless, they answered the call to strike and accepted Gus Hall's leadership. But Girdlers's men were not asleep either. They had been busy rounding up scabs and "loyal" employees and barricading them inside the mill. They began to put pressure on the police and the political errand-boys.<sup>18</sup> They organized back-to-work movements and through their hired press spread the alarm far and wide. To feed the men<sup>19</sup> in the mill, they sent food by air from Cleveland. They deputized goons and supplied them with tear-gas and grenades. They shot and they killed.

It was in the course of this strike that the first attempt to frame Gus Hall was made. Gus had been sent by Murray to Chicago, and while he was there a warrant was issued for his arrest. He had been indicted, Gus said with a shrug, "for almost everything under the sun — nothing was left out. When I saw the Chicago papers," he continued, "I sent a telegram to the newspapers and the sheriff, who said I was a fugitive and that I was being hunted in six states, telling them I'd be back. But both kept the telegram secret. When I hurried back they slapped bail<sup>20</sup> on me — the highest bail ever slapped on anyone there — \$50,000!

"While I was in jail," he went on, "I had two delegations come to visit me and see for themselves and hear for themselves what my story was. One delegation was made up of Protestant ministers, the other had a Catholic priest in it. They were impressed with what they learned."

The frame-up was the work of a stool-pigcon who planted nitroglycerine on the union's station-wagon. National Guardsmen "discovered" the nitro in the car. The point of all this was to connect Gus with an attempt to blow up something. "All the time I was in Chicago."

The prosecution started a big campaign to buy witnesses, and finally got one. "But before the trial came up," Hall said, "the man was sent to prison for the criminally insane." He laughed.

"What happened?" I asked. "Did they convict you?"

"Oh," he replied, "the case dragged on and on. The judge didn't want to handle such a hot potato, so finally a new judge was appointed by the Supreme Court. This judge asked me to go along on a misdemeanor fine of \$500 for knocking down a post. I shouldn't have even agreed to that, I guess."

Phil Murray paid Hall a great compliment on his handling of the strike. It was the best organized strike anywhere. Then Murray sent him on various other assignments. Gus was in northern Michigan for a while, then helped organize the can factories in Brooklyn, Washburn Wire in the Bronx.

"I felt," Gus said, "I was making my best contribution to the steel workers by helping to build up a core of Communists. They'd guarantee that the union would remain a fighting organization. Don't forget, the steel union was largely built under Communist leadership".

Although Gus had escaped the first attempted frame-up, he was not so lucky the second time. Frame-ups are the occupational hazards of working-class leaders, and one grows almost used to living among them, as a trainer gets used to his tigers. In 1940 the Communist Party circulated petitions among the electorate of Ohio, as elsewhere, soliciting signatures to get the party on the ballot. Each petition bore the name of the party, big as life, as the law requires. There was nothing unusual about this activity. But this time, something new entered the picture. The F.B.I. — the same F.B.I. which in 1920, with the panting assistance of J. Edgar Hoover, had driven the new Communist Party underground. Its agents roused citizens out of their beds in the dead of night, threatened them with arrest, implied they had committed some crime by signing a Communist Party petition, threatened them with loss of their job if they re-

fused to repudiate their signatures. The local newspapers published the names of the signers. A certain number gave way to this terror and "repudiated" their signatures. On that pretext Gus Hall and several others were indicted. They were found guilty and sent to jail. Gus drew a ninety-day sentence.

"I was in jail on Pearl Harbor Day," he said. "The sheriff woke me up at four A.M. to tell me about it. In 1943 I was drafted into the Navy, had my boot training at Great Lakes. I was sent to the Pacific, around Okinawa, Guam and Saipan."<sup>21</sup>

And now I was ready to ask the jackpot question.

"Where were you," I said, "at the time the Grand Jury indictment charges that you conspired to teach and advocate the overthrow of the U.S. government — in April, 1945?"

"In April, 1945," he answered deliberately, "at the time they charge me with conspiring to do that, I was in direct charge of all repair work of all motors in the biggest naval base in Guam."

We sat in silence, pondering this.

I shook hands with Gus Hall and left him as he hurried to catch a train for Cleveland. In the confident, at-ease tone of his voice and shape of his will, I caught a glimpse of the courage and wit with which he had pulled through the many bitter trials of his still young life.

Outside, the atmosphere was paralyzed with deceit. Nobody as yet was attacked by roaming mobs of storm-troopers (but Bob Thompson, another one of the Twelve, soon would be!). No one carried the yellow star of David on his arm to be shunned by the populace. But there was fear, a strong, live fear, like an odor. It hung about everyone, it hid in their eyes, it was tucked away in their conversation. People looked upon the Dewey-Truman exhibition with confusion, horror, frustration of fear. All their beings revolted against the fate to which the newspapers and radios were driving them; everything in their lives yearned for peace and happiness. But over and over, like a club, was the cry,



"Communist... spy... Communist..." And like a gun, the threat of war. You planned for a week ahead; you had given up planning for a year. A glass wall had been quietly and slowly built around each brain: you saw but you did not hear; you heard but you did not see.

The glass wall would have to be broken down.

One thing was different from 1933 when the Reichstag was set afire. Fascism had already suffered a mortal blow, and there were more to fight it. The world was wiser. The wall of lies had been shattered in Europe. Only here did it remain relatively intact.

The glass wall would have to be broken down.

I had wanted to ask Gus Hall what he got out of being a Communist.

"What do you get out of it? What's in it for you?" But it is impossible to ask a man why he loves his children and dies for them, or what character is, or honor, or loyalty, or conviction.

*Gil Green*<sup>1</sup>

### AN AESOPIAN LETTER

DEAR LLOYD:

Thanks ever so much for your letter. Henry, Gus and I enjoyed it. But pray, why did you refer to us by our first names? Was it carelessness or bravado? Certainly you must be aware that times have changed radically. What may have been correct and proper in the age of B. M. (Before McGohy),<sup>2</sup> is entirely improper now. Today any mention of people by their first names can lead to dire consequences—the charge of participating in a conspiracy.

Don't laugh. Just follow our trial and you will see what I mean. Why just the other day a witness on the stand had the temerity to refer to Gus Hall, whom he knows intimately, by his first name. Medina immediately screwed on his special cross-examination look and asked the witness, "Do you mean to say you call him Gus?" And when the witness answered "Yes", the Judge turned on his own inimitable I-knew-they-were-guilty-all-along expression.

Nor does it make any difference that you've known me for twenty years—or that we have always called each other by our first names. In fact, the only reason this letter does not begin with a "My dear Mr. Brown" salutation is that your carelessness has already fully exposed our clandestine relationship. Hence, the damage has been done. A brand new file bearing your name has been added to the

forest of files in the Washington headquarters of the G-Men. This file is located in a special ultra-secret section marked "Extra-Dangerous Conspirators, or Men Who Are Known By Their First Names." (By the way, Lloyd, what in the deuce does the G in G-Men stand for? I've tried everything, but the only word I can think of is Gestapo. I know it can't be that—or can it?)

As I write this, I recall another instance of political naïveté on your part. Some months ago, just as the trial began, an article of yours appeared in *Masses & Mainstream*<sup>3</sup> mentioning that you first met me at a school organized by the Young Communist League. Tut, tut, Lloyd, how could you? Don't you know that the word school has become a naughty word and strictly verboten?<sup>4</sup> If Goering reacted violently to the word culture, his imitators here are most allergic to the word school. And when that word is preceded by the adjective Marxist, they either burst a blood-vessel<sup>5</sup> or go batty à la Forrestal.<sup>6</sup> Yes, indeed, Lloyd, mentioning schools was a serious faux pas<sup>7</sup> on your part. But enough of this criticism.

It is now exactly three haircuts<sup>8</sup> and four days since my American way of life was abruptly and arbitrarily changed. The reason? I simply expressed my amazement and chagrin when the court ruled out of evidence<sup>9</sup> a particularly germane article. There was nothing contemptuous in what I said, or in how I said it, but apparently His Honor had a guilty conscience. Subsequently, about ten days later His Majesty—I mean His Honor—saw the light and permitted the selfsame article into evidence. One would have assumed that once the article was let in, I would have been let out. But that did not happen. So at this point we're both in—the article in the court record and I in safe-keeping.

My new status has not only changed my way of life, it has also changed my thinking. I've begun to realize that we Marxists<sup>1</sup> are far too materialistic in our outlook. Before my recent experience I used to pooh-pooh men like Stuart

Chase<sup>10</sup> who insisted that much of the strife and struggle of our modern world are not to be traced to inherent and irreconcilable contradictions but to what he so aptly and brilliantly termed "the tyranny of words." I now know better. I can see more clearly that if Henry Ford's workers hate his guts, this cannot be ascribed to such Marxist concepts as "exploitation" or "the class struggle," but to something far simpler. It's because Ford is constantly characterized as a "capitalist," "monopolist," "tycoon" or "boss". These words all have an unhealthy connotation that can only lead to hatred, antagonism and strife. Don't you see, if there were no such words as "monopoly" or "trust," how could anyone be "anti-monopoly" or "anti-trust"?

Perhaps you would like to know how I came to this realization. Let me start from the beginning. As you recall, neither Winston, Hall nor I was sentenced by His Honor. We were just "remanded."<sup>12</sup> Now at first we thought it was the same thing. But that's only because we underestimated the science of semantics.

To be remanded is quite different from being sentenced. A sentence follows a conviction and a conviction is bad because then you're a convict and when you get out you're an ex-con. However, when you're remanded, you're not convicted, you're only recommitted into custody. So you see there is a tremendous difference between the two and we daily thank our lucky stars that we were remanded and not sentenced.

There are moments after curfew rings and the lights go out at 10:00 p.m., when I lie and ponder this matter. True enough, remand is a much more pleasant word. But had I been sentenced, would I be anywhere else than where I am? And the answer is, yes. Had we been sentenced for contempt we would have gotten thirty days as did Johnny Gates and thus been out of here by now. But then again, who wants to be like John Gates? He was sentenced. He's an ex-con. While we're only remanded.

A change of words can make a world of difference. Let

us take the word jail. An ugly word. And the word prison, too. No wonder men object to being taken from their families and friends to be housed in places bearing such names. Words like jail and prison are definitely not conducive to making people feel happy and content. They're not like the word home, for example. And so, presto, we do not stay in a jail, but in a home—a Federal Detention Home. See the difference?—the gentility of it?

Recognizing the solace to be found in a mere change of words, I tried to be helpful. I decided to refer to the jail—pardon the nasty word—as the Exclusive West Street Men's Club.<sup>13</sup> I thought this more fitting. After all, what kind of a home is it without either a woman or a kid?

But I must admit that this effort on my part has not been too successful. In the first place the men here are very backward—they say that this onion by any other name would smell the same. And in the second place, let me confess, that try as I will I'm compelled to agree with them.

This new-words-for-old movement affects everything. The Daily Worker refers to us as "prisoners." But this is just another Communist exaggeration. Prisoners? Perish the thought! There are no prisoners here—only inmates. And what a difference in morale this makes. Or when the Daily Worker says that we travel to and from court each day wearing handcuffs, that too is inaccurate. They're not handcuffs—just stainless steel bracelets.

And so a semantic revolution is taking place that may in the long run augur of greater significance than a social revolution. Why change things, when you can more easily change words?

No, Lloyd, I'm not going stir-crazy. What then is all this nonsense about? Simply this. If there is anything that has nauseated me during the course of this lengthy trial, it is the pervading official court atmosphere of two-faced sanctimonious hypocrisy, where words are used to conceal meaning or to convey the opposite of what is meant.

When the Judge for example says to the Defense Counsel, "All right, I will hear you," it usually means: "Talk away for all I care, it will not make any difference anyway."

I'm thinking of such phrases as: "These defendants are cloaked with a presumption of innocence throughout the course of the trial," which everyone in the courtroom knows to mean the exact opposite.

Or, "The burden of proof is on the prosecution. It must prove the guilt of the defendants beyond a reasonable doubt." But is there a single person at Foley Square who believes this to be the case? In our trial the burden of proof is on the defense as His Honor one day inadvertently blurted out.

Or, when the court says, "I am giving the defendants a fair trial," this only means, "I am giving the defendants as fair a trial as I think they deserve."

Or, when the Judge says, "How many times must I repeat that a political party and political doctrine are not on trial, only these eleven defendants," he and everyone else concerned knows that the *only* reason the defendants are on trial is because they are the leaders of a working class political party with its own political doctrine.

Or, when His Honor meets acquaintances or sees delegations, he invariably puts on an aggrieved martyred look and says, "Oh, you'll never know what I've been going through! But I intend to survive it!"

Imagine the sham and hypocrisy involved! What he's been going through(!). Is he in the prisoner's dock? Are his liberty and rights in jeopardy? Is he a victim of this heresy trial? Is his political party in danger of being outlawed? And yet this pious humbug dares to talk about what he's going through!

"But I intend to survive it," says he, as if there were any doubt on that score, or as if someone was trying to prevent this. Of course, he'll survive it. Why shouldn't he? He wouldn't give this trial up for anything. He glories in it. Overnight he has achieved "fame." He has become the darling of every reactionary force in the country. A few reaction-

ary newspapers have even had the effrontery to mention his name in connection with the vacancy in the Supreme Court.

Survive the ordeal! What ordeal? He loves it.

Of course, not everything is as he would like it. There are unpleasant and embarrassing moments. The defendants and their attorneys are rude and uncouth rascals. They have a most annoying way of constantly talking about democratic rights. They persist in accusing their accusers. Why can't they be good boys and submit quietly and gracefully to this legal raping? And the fact that they do not, is this not sufficient proof that they are "deliberately and wilfully obstructing the administration of justice"?

It is no accident that it is Medina, the Judge, and not McGohey, the Prosecutor, who has become the central "hero" of the trial for the reactionary press, including the Hearst papers. And yet, it is McGohey who represents in the courtroom the direct and open assault of reaction against the Communist Party.

Why then is not McGohey the main "hero" of these forces? Because in the present stage of reaction in the United States a McGohey is completely helpless without a Medina. A famed Cuban jurist, after visiting the courtroom at Foley Square, aptly observed that in this trial there were two prosecutors but no judge. But the important thing to note is that not even a dozen prosecutors would suffice if there were not one wearing the "fair," "objective" and "impartial" robes of a judge.

That is why the reactionaries in and out of Congress were so incensed against Judge Kaufman of the Hiss trial. They sought to impeach him because his rulings did not guarantee a conviction. For them a judge's role is to pretend to be impartial, to put on an act of being fair, while in effect being the opposite. In other words, their model of a judge is Medina.

Of course, Medina has no easy task. To pretend to be unbiased and fair and at the same time to *guarantee* a conviction in a frame-up as clumsy and monstrous as this one,

is a truly Machiavellian task. And that is why the reactionaries everywhere sympathize with him and publicly defend him as a paragon of patience and virtue. And that is also why His Honor is most sensitive of all to criticism of his judicial conduct, especially public criticism. For if the public ever gets to realize that the black robe of judicial purity is only worn to conceal the soiled clothes of prejudice, this trial will stand exposed for the ghastly mockery of justice that it is.

A trial such as ours can only be gotten away with so long as the vast majority of the people still think that we're at least getting a fair trial and that justice will be done. The very length of the trial itself is used as an argument to "prove" that in the United States even Communists can get a fair trial and that therefore the Constitution and its Bill of Rights are still sacred, inviolable documents, nowise threatened by reaction. But what has a few months more or less got to do with it? Had the trial lasted but a single day, and the indictment thrown out on that day, that would have truly constituted the fairest trial of all!

The important thing to realize is that Medina is more than a judge in a particular trial. He has become a symbol of the present stage of reaction in this country. This is a stage in which open, bald-faced pro-fascist reaction cannot hope to be successful in any direct appeal to the people. The people are opposed to witch-hunts, spy-scares and heresy trials. They want civil rights, democracy, peace and economic security. Reactionary anti-democratic attacks can be gotten away with only when dressed up in democratic garb. To tear off the mask of two-faced hypocritical demagoguery, whether of a Medina or a Truman, is the key to exposing and blocking the path of growing reaction in the United States.

I had to get this out of my system, Lloyd. I'm sorry you had to be the victim. My best regards to Lily and my love to your two beautiful daughters. Regards from Henry and Gus.

Until we meet again,

• GIL.



## ПРИМЕЧАНИЯ К ТЕКСТУ

### IN THE FLOW OF TIME

1. **pachucos** презрительная кличка мексиканцев (ведет свое начало от названия мексиканского города Pachuca); **zootsuiter** в переносном значении гангстер-мексиканец (**zootsuit** — модный в США во время войны костюм, излюбленная одежда гангстеров)

2. **L. A. (Los Angeles)** *эд.*: округ Лос-Анжелос

3. **drapes** (*жург.*) широкие расшитые штаны, которые носят мексиканцы

4. **the gold rush** *эд.*: калифорнийская «золотая лихорадка» 1848—49 гг.

5. **Yaqui** индеец племени Яки

6. **alfalfa** люцерна

7. **squash** тыква, кабачок

8. **tortillas** (*исп.*) лепешки из кукурузы

9. **borrachito** (*исп.*) навеселе

10. **chick** (*жург.*) возлюбленная

11. дробовое ружье 22 калибра

12. **hacendados** (*исп.*) помещики

13. **St. Christopher medal** изображение святого Христофора, которое верующие католики носят на шее

14. **gabachos** (*исп.*) *эд.*: презрительная кличка иностранцев

15. **fingertip coat** куртка, длиной до кончиков пальцев опущенной руки

16. **track fellow** (*разг.*) легкоатлет

17. **MP (Military Police)** военная полиция

18. **tamales** (*исп.*) кушанье из кукурузы; **enchilada sauce** чилийский соус

19. **gringo** (*исп.*) презрительное прозвище иностранцев в Латинской Америке, в особенности североамериканцев

20. **jive** один из уродливых видов современной джазовой музыки

21. **jeep** (*разг.*) «виллис»

22. **menudo** (*исп.*) петроха

### UNDERSTAND WHAT I MEAN?

1. **patronized** *эд.*: был постоянным клиентом

2. **was shaving corners as well as necks** *эд.*: срезал не только чужие бороды, но и собственные расходы (**to shave corners** *идиом.* срезать расходы)

3. **I. D. card** воинское удостоверение личности

4. **bulldog cab** кабина грузовика, мотор которого находится в кузове или в самой кабине

5. **double trailers** двойные прицепы
6. **police prowler car** машина полицейского патруля
7. **self-powered landing barges** самоходные десантные баржи
8. **motor convoy** автоколонна
9. **army** армейский
10. **peajacket (морск.)** бушлат
11. **clippers** машинка для стрижки волос
12. **lores** сказания
13. **upped and floored (разг.)** взял и сбил с ног
14. **patio (исп.)** внутренний дворик
15. **G1 (Government Issue) зд.:** солдатское обмундирование
16. **induction centre** призывной пункт
17. **VOC (Volunteer Officer Candidate)** кандидат на офицерскую должность
18. **discharge зд.:** демобилизация
19. **trading viewpoints (разг.)** обмениваться мнениями
20. **Jim Crow** джамкромизм -- проводимые в США шовинистические и расистские меры по унижению негров и обособлению их от белых; **Jim Crow bus** автобус с отдельными местами для «белых» и «цветных»
21. **to snap him out of it зд.:** чтобы вывести его из этого состояния
22. **of the Smith and Wesson line зд.:** где правят Смит и Вессон (марка револьвера)
23. **sob story** жалостная история
24. **can (разг.)** упрятать в тюрьму
25. **eroded зд.:** изрытое морщинами

## HUMILIATION

1. **stews (жарг.)** пьяншны
2. **hofbraus (нем.)** пивные
3. **the kind you gave a wide margin зд.:** из тех, к кому лучше не подходить близко
4. **shrimp cocktail** креветки под соусом
5. **coons (преср.)** негры
6. **short-order cook** повар порционных блюд
7. **jigs (преср.)** негры
8. **well made up** умело, в меру покрашенное
9. **upsweep hairdo** прическа со взбитыми кверху волосами
10. **hamburger** котлета
11. **overshoes** галоши
12. **charges зд.:** заявление в полицию
13. **police record зд.:** полицейский протокол

## WILL YOU WALK INTO MY PARLOUR

1. **land transfer зд.:** сделка с земельной собственностью
2. **real estate plunger** спекулянт недвижимым имуществом
3. **weltering in ... the "sinews of war" зд.:** купаясь в деньгах ("the sinews of war" по характерному американскому выражению -- «главный двигатель войны», т.е. деньги)

4. **weather it out** *эд.*: выстоять, довести дело до конца
5. **lorn bachelor** одинокий холостяк
6. **en route** (*фр.*) в пути
7. **whist, pinochle or poker games** вист, безик, покер (карточные игры)
8. **to appeal to him** *эд.*: привлекать его
9. **hauteur** (*фр.*) надменность
10. **racer** гоночный автомобиль
11. **to essay** *эд.*: предпринять
12. **careening** *эд.*: лихая езда
13. **steering gear** (*англ.*) управление
14. **to fix on them** привлечь их
15. **ostensible** *эд.*: подставной
16. **escaped death by a hair's breadth** были на волосок от смерти
17. **in a nutshell** вкратце, в двух словах
18. **sea wall** *эд.*: стена, выходящая на море
19. **katyids** американская разновидность кузнечиков
20. **character** *эд.*: поведение
21. **you are a little light in the upper story** (*разг.*) у тебя ветер гуляет в голове
22. **amanuensis** переписчица
23. **brick** (*разг.*) молодчина
24. **concocted picture** *эд.*: кинифальшивка

### THE WAY THINGS ARE

1. **if he was all there** (*разг.*) все ли у него дома
2. **unspouting** без многословия и ложного пафоса
3. **dough** (*жарг.*) деньги
4. **blintzes** блинчики
5. **began blowing in each other's faces** *эд.*: дышали друг другу в лицо
6. **a musical** (*разг.*) оперетта
7. **a salesman or a stock clerk** продавец или торговый агент
8. **vinesmothered** густо обвитые диким виноградом
9. **aisles** *эд.*: ряды
10. **marquee** навес с афишами над входом в театр
11. **London Raid** "Воздушный налет на Лондон"
12. **column** *эд.*: регулярные обзоры
13. **Nash-Kelvinator** крупная американская фирма по производству холодильников
14. **stole the show** загнал всех
15. **physic** слабительное
16. **collaborator** коллаборационист

### LOYAL MISS FERCH

1. **Loyalty Committee** т.н. «Комиссия по проверке лояльности», обремененная правом увольнять с государственной службы всех «неблагонадежных»
2. **had taken it in her stride** принимала это как должное

3. Springfield, Ill (Illinois) г. Спрингфилд, штата Иллинойс;  
Springfield, Mass (Massachusetts) город Спрингфилд, штата Массачусетс

4. over a national hookup передача, которая ведется сразу по всем радиостанциям страны

5. to get on line становиться в очередь

6. sale денежная распродажа

7. cute (жарг.) красивые

8. to draw out эд.: спров. ширевать

9. the government must receive the benefit of the doubt сомнение должно быть обращено в пользу правительства

### THE SACRED THING

1. bums (жарг.) бродяги

2. started givin' me lip начал отрываться

3. flunkey холоду

4. medals эд.: изображения святых, которые носят на шее верующие

### OSCAR WANTS TO KNOW

1. opportunity эд.: т.н. «американские возможности»; по лживой, демagogической пропаганде правящих кругов США, в Америке якобы любой может стать миллионером

2. tricycle трехколесный велосипед

3. Jack and the Beanstalk широко распространенная детская сказка о «Джеке и бобыном стручке», который в одну ночь вырос в огромное дерево и достиг вершин небес. Самое это чудо олицетворяет якобы «неограниченные американские возможности»

### ART FOR HEART'S SAKE

1. jerkwater railroad эд.: захудалая ж.-д. ветка

2. ran an elevator работал лифтером

3. elfishly ширво, лукаво

4. by gum! (вулг.) черт побери!

5. andirons подставки для дров в камине

6. gyrations эд.: манипуляция

7. to tax эд.: обременить, подорвать

8. we've got to stop him эд.: мы должны образумить его

### KNOW YOUR PLACE

1. autobahn (нем.) автострада

2. SHAEF (Supreme Headquarters of the American Expeditionary Forces) главный штаб американских экспедиционных войск

3. cacher (фр.) прятаться

4. regimentation эд.: отчисления на нужды гитлеровской армии

5. Amalgamated (Amalgamated Steel Corporation) американская стальная корпорация

6. the whole kit and caboodle (жарг.) целиком, со всеми потрохам

7. W&CBR фирма Уиллоуби, Костер, Брюиль, Риган
8. *shanghaied* насильно увезенные
9. DP Camps (*displaced persons*) лагеря перемещенных лиц
10. *status quo ante* (*лат.*) прежнее положение
11. Krauts «капустники» — презрительная кличка немцев
12. *get-up* *эд.*: наряд
13. M. C. (*Medical Corps*) медицинская служба
14. *is discretionary* *эд.*: установлен по усмотрению
15. *surplus* *cash* излишки денег в обращении
16. *rake-off* (*жарг.*) доля, процент
17. *fixed her up* (*разг.*) устроил ее
18. *alumni* (*лат.*) выпускники, питомцы
19. *your handouts* *эд.*: ваши материалы для печати
20. *cashed in* (*жарг.*) спекулировала
21. CIC (*Counter Intelligence Corps*) контрразведка
22. *Civilian Motor Pool* *эд.*: автобаза из реквизируемых у населения автомобилей, используемых для нужд оккупационных властей (обслуживается гражданскими шоферами)
23. *bond paper* гербовая бумага
24. *pro tem* (*tempore*) (*лат.*) временно исполняющий обязанности
25. *curfew* «полудейский час» — время, после которого запрещается свободное передвижение гражданского населения по городу
26. *the desk* *эд.*: портье
27.  *buzzer* *эд.*: звонок
28. QMC (*Quartermaster Corps*) интендантская служба
29. *extension* отводной аппарат
30. *liberated* *эд.*: (*жарг.*) «трюфейный»; (*букв.*) освобожденный — характерное словечко для мародерствующей американской армии
31. ETO (*European Theatre of Operations*) европейский театр военных действий
32. *breaching charges* подрывные заряды
33. TNT тринитротолуол
34. *caps* капсюли
35. *fuses* запальные шнуры
36. *Quonset huts* сборные дома

## THE GREEN GREEN GRASS AND A GUN

1. *American oil people* *эд.*: служащие американской нефтяной компании.
2. *sentry box* караульная будка
3. *rum shop* кабачок
4. *stall* ларек
5. *a break* *эд.*: поблажка

## MAN ON A ROAD

1. *macadam road* мостовая из щебенки (по имени инженера-шотландца Мак Адама)
2. *shifted into first* *эд.*: включил первую скорость

3. **hitch-hiker's gesture** жест, которым останавливают машину — вытянутая рука с большим пальцем, указывающим направление, по которому хочет следовать «хич-хайкер»; обычный способ путешествия на попутных машинах людей, не имеющих средств

4. **Bierce** Амброз Бирс (1842—1914), американский писатель. Известность получил как автор «страшных рассказов», в которых преобладает фантастика, пессимизм, преувеличенный интерес к патологии.

5. В транскрипции речи Пигкетта автор сохраняет особенности произношения южан: *ah* вм. *i*, *uhm* вм. *time*, *kin* вм. *can*, *bin* вм. *been*, *hit* вм. *it*, *favch* вм. *favour* и т. д.

6. **lilting drawl** нараспев и растягивая слова

7. **to keep thrusting at his privacy** эд.: лезть в душу

8. **T.B. (tuberculosis)** туберкулез

9. **punch drunk** эд.: олушенный ударами

10. **slate dump** террикон

11. **mine tippie** копер

12. автором сохранена орфография письма

13. **my lungs is agitting' scab like** мои легкие покрываются коростой

### THE HAPPIEST MAN ON EARTH

1. **shanty** хижина; эд.: контора

2. **red gumbo** краснозем

3. **phony (жарг.)** болтун, обманщик

4. **lay over** делают остановку

5. **get a blowout** лопнет камера

6. **relief** пособие по безработице

7. **A-1 man** первоклассный специалист

8. **New Deal** т.н. «Новый курс» президента Ф. Д. Рузвельта

9. **beans (жарг.)** чепуха!

### YOU ARE IN AMERICA, TIMMY

1. **denim** грубая бумажная ткань, из которой обычно шьется спецодежда

2. **safety shoes** тяжелые, с металлическими носками, «вечные» башмаки

3. **stringpiece** стенка мола

4. **bottom deck** нижняя палуба

5. **freighter** грузовой пароход

6. **crates** большие ящики с грузами

7. **tier** ряд, ярус

8. **stevedore contractor** подрядчик по погрузочным работам

9. **waterfront** порт

10. **gummy** карточная игра

11. **the Shannon** важнейшая река Ирландии •

12. **union button** профсоюзный значок

13. **Christian Brothers' school** приходская школа католического общества «Братья во Христе»

14. **"Duck!"** «полундра!»

15. **donkeyman** машинист паровой лебедки
16. **debris** обломки, мусор
17. **shape-up** пункт набора рабочей силы
18. **fat warrens** «крышные дыры»
19. **"Look out!"** берегись!
20. **set-up** *зд.*: строй, система

## THE COMPANY

1. **aura** *зд.*: обаяние
2. **talk shop** *зд.*: заводил разговор на деловые темы
3. Т. Вулф ironically цитирует здесь «классические» и «исторические» (большой частью недостоверные) заявления американских толкователей, которые приводятся во всех школьных учебниках в США
4. **mid-Victorian** относящиеся к середине царствования королевы Виктории (1837-1901)
5. По античному преданию Афина-Паллада, богиня воинской доблести и мудрости, вышла вооруженной из головы Зевса
6. **Canaan** (библ.) Ханаан - обетованная земля
7. **"P.S.A."** г. с. Письмо С. Англтон
8. **social order** *зд.*: светский орден (организация)
9. **gay Havana** на «веселую» Гаванну не распространялся сухой закон, существовавший тогда в США

## EXODUS

1. **hawg-killing** заколоть кабана (автор дает простонародное произношение южан "hawg" вместо "hog")
2. **"It's shore making that old cotton pop out"** «От этой жары коробочки хлопка трескаются»
3. **picking** сбор хлопка
4. **Rust cotton pickers** хлопкоуборочные машины фирмы "Rust"
5. **scrapping** огазки, «огрехи»
6. **game rooster** боевой петух
7. **pin striped suit** костюм в полоску
8. **law** *зд.*: блюстители закона
9. **deputies** попутные
10. **"Don't you know they got us?"** (*разг.*) *зд.*: «Разве ты не видишь, то мы попались?»
11. **trespassing** вторжение на территорию, принадлежащую другому лицу
12. **"Want a lift, buddy?"** «Тебя подвезти, друг?»

## THE GRASSHOPPER IS STIRRING

1. **probes** зонды
2. **silo** *зд.*: силосная башня
3. **quarter section** участок в 160 акров
4. **coop** (*разг.*) кутузка

5. IWW (Industrial Workers of the World) Индустриальные Рабочие Мира — анархо-синдикалистская организация основанная в 1905. Во время первой мировой войны занимала антиинтернационалистическую позицию. После Великой Октябрьской социалистической революции, когда часть передовых рабочих, членов ИРМ, во главе с Биллом Хэйвордом откололась и вошла в коммунистическую партию США, ИРМ заняла реакционную позицию.

6. •marcus сорт шенины

7. YCL (Young Communist League) эд.: юные коммун

## CLARKTON

1. Empire State Building самое высокое здание Нью Йорка

2. laminated chairs гнутые металлические кресла

3. *Fortune, United States News, Wall Street Journal* профашистские журналы и газеты, органы Уолл-стрит

4. Yellowstone Park парк-заповедник в штате Вайоминг

5. the Rockies (разг.) Скалистые Горы

6. asset эд.: актив

7. the Pentagon building (букв.) «Пятиугольник» здание Военного министерства США

8. I am saddled эд.: я обременен, у меня на плечах ...

9. maintenance уход, ремонт, обслуживание машины

10. it would be more on the ball эд.: будет более точно

11. I did a job по заданию

12. for United эд.: для частной компании В США, как и известно, большие компании имеют свои собственные организации промышленного шпионажа и свой штат агентов-provokatorov

13. they pay you like a scab and treat you like a slob они платят тебе как скэбу (штрейкбрехеру), и обращаются с тобой как с какой-нибудь дрянью

14. full-time основная работа

15. dinker резальщик

16. the local местная партийная организация

17. memo записная книжка

18. shop branch and neighborhood branch заводская (производственная) и территориальная ячейка

19. Williams колледж Вильямса

20. double talk эд.: подражание, возбуждающие умы разговоры

21. Ryan makes a big pitch (разг.) Райан ораторствует

22. end-all самоцель

23. all that crap (жарг.) вся эта чушь

24. soup kitchens бесплатные столовые для забастовщиков

25. no sleighride (разг.) нешуточное дело

26. in this racket (разг.) эд.: в этом грязном деле

27. commie (жарг.) коммунист

28. swung it over to him (разг.) привлек симпатии слушателей на свою сторону

29. mick (презр.) прландец

30. company union компанейские профсоюзы, организованные предпринимателями в целях подавления и подчинения рабочего движения



31. CIO (Congress of Industrial Organizations) Конгресс производителей профсоюзов создан в ноябре 1935 г. В первые годы его руководители заигрывали с левым крылом рабочего движения США. После второй мировой войны продажная верхушка КПП стала проводить откровенно реакционную антирабочую политику. Сейчас в блоке с профбюрократами из АФТ она ведет разнузданную пропаганду против СССР, неизменно выступая в роли пособницы поджигателей войны.

32. to throw a monkey wrench *эд.*: вставлять палки в колеса

33. trespassing *см. примечание 11 к рассказу "Exodus."*

34. state capitol здание, в котором заседает парламент Штата

35. development *эд.*: рабочий поселок

36. mobile hot coffee and sinker canteen передвижная закусочная, торгующая горячим кофе и булочками

37. sellout (*жарг.*) *эд.*: предательство

38. mutual assistance pact (*полит.*) пакт о взаимопомощи

39. vets (*разг.*) ветераны

40. salamander жаровня

41. give them the arm приветствуйте их (по фашистскому образцу)

42. torpedoes (*жарг.*) *эд.*: гангстеры-головорезы, наемники полиции

43. cropper издольщик

44. nightstick полицейская дубинка

45. to call it a day *эд.*: прекратить эту историю

46. common law обычное право

47. warrant ордер на арест

48. John Doe ордера на арест, в которые вписывается условное имя John Doe, когда фамилия человека подлежащего аресту неизвестна

49. to fix bail обеспечить освобождение под залог

50. doughnuts пончики

51. zwieback сладкие сухари

52. the Bells of Saint Mary's католическая молитва «Колокола св. Марии»

53. Anzio, Tarawa, and Normandy места, где американская армия вела боевые действия во второй мировой войне

54. cops (*разг.*) полицейские

55. AP (Associated Press) газетное агентство «Ассошиэтид Пресс»

56. promotion person пресс-агент, «толкач»

57. on space rates на почасной оплате

58. it's going to backfire обернется против нас

59. k'nuck (*разг.*) канадец

60. sitzkrieg (*нем.*) «сидячая» война в 1939—40 г.г. на Западе

61. run-of-the-mill *эд.*: ремесленник, скучный работяга

62. dinge (*н-еэр.*) негр

63. odd buck (*жарг.*) лишний доллар

64. in the old country *эд.*: у себя на родине, в Ирландии

65. a grand (*жарг.*) 1000 долларов

66. shine (*н-еэр.*) черномазый

67. Florida, Arizona, the Birkshires курорты  
 68. we're not just beating around the bush давайте говорить прямо  
 69. I don't pull any bluffs я не стану обманывать  
 70. diplomatic double-talk дипломатические околичности  
 71. from way back (разг.) уже давно  
 72. clichés (фр.) клише, банальности, общие места  
 73. the Pilgrims «Отцы-пилигримы», поселенцы, основатели первых колоний в Америке  
 74. bills эд.: ассигнации, кредитные билеты  
 75. Thoreau Генри Дэвид Торо (1817—1862) — американский буржуазный философ-идеалист и писатель  
 76. going-over эд.: встряска  
 77. pimps эд.: прихвостни  
 78. could go down on a rubber duck эд.: как бы они не изощрились  
 79. he got a big hand (разг.) это всех увлекло за ним  
 80. there's a stool inside замешался какой-то провокатор  
 81. turning yellow? (жарг.) труслив?  
 82. milk train эд.: неудобный по времени поезд. (бркв.) «поезд молочниц»  
 83. funnel down to the bottom скатиться на дно  
 84. gin эд.: хлопкоочистка  
 85. can (разг.) кутузка  
 86. to take over эд.: командовать

## A UNION IS BORN

1. general cargo смешанный груз  
 2. the Golden West название, укоренившееся в языке со времен «золотой лихорадки» на западе США  
 3. turning to longshore эд.: становиться портовым грузчиком  
 4. peanuts (жарг.) пусяки  
 5. the United States Commissioner правительственный чиновник  
 в порту  
 6. fo'c's'le эд.: кубрик  
 7. bridge капитанский мостик  
 8. radicals эд.: левые  
 9. Fink Hall эд.: биржа труда не контролируемая профсоюзом, где во время забастовки предприниматели набирают итрейкбрехеров и не членов профессионального союза; Fink (разг.) итрейкбрехер  
 10. front порт  
 11. ten spot (жарг.) десятидолларовая бумажка  
 12. graft (разг.) взятки  
 13. hockshop ломбард  
 14. hickory дешевая, из бумажной ткани  
 15. gondola ж.д. платформа  
 16. jeans простые, рабочие штаны  
 17. nope (разг.) нет  
 18. foreclosed (юрид.) отобрана за неуплату процентов по закладной

19. **Pedro** (разг.) Сан-Педро, порт близ Лос-Анжелоса
20. **bull** (презр.) полицейский, «фараон»
21. **to learn the ropes** (разг.) познать азы
22. **MWU** (Marine Workers Industrial Union) профсоюз моряков
23. **porkchops** (букв.) свиные отбивные; (жарг.) этим термином американские профсоюзы обозначают требования улучшения экономических условий жизни
24. **set-up** строй
25. **while I'm still holding heavy** пока водятся у меня деньги
26. **on the hummer** (разг.) без работы, «на приколе»
27. **heaving line** эд.: поддержка
28. **a live wire** (разг.) бойкий, расторопный человек
29. **dough** (жарг.) деньги
30. **soul savers** (презр.) ораторы из «Армии спасения», (букв.) «душеспасители»
31. **to soapbox** (разг.) митинговать (в качестве трибуны обычно использовались ящики из мыла)
32. **hot ship** (жарг.) корабль, который грузили штрейкбрехеры
33. **contacts** эд.: адреса верных людей
34. **big beef** (жарг.) главная тема разговоров
35. **overtime** сверхурочные
36. **bosun** боцман
37. **schedule** график
38. **Valpo** (разг.) Вальпараисо, порт в Чили
39. **whip** кран
40. **A. M. (ante meridiem)** (лат.) до полудня
41. **between two stacks** между двух штабелей меди
42. **messroom** эд.: матросская столовая
43. **to let go the lines** (морск.) отдать концы, отвалить
44. **to log for insubordination** записать в судовой журнал за неповиновение
45. **institution food** благотворительные бесплатные обеды
46. **industry** эд.: предприниматели
47. **he gives me ulcers** эд.: наградил меня язвой желудка
48. **to bark up a wrong tree** эд.: вести по ложному пути
49. **New York's "finest"** (разг.) нью-йоркская полиция
50. **haul ass** (жарг.) отчаливать
51. **melee** (фр.) свалка, сшибка
52. **the Old Slip Station** полицейский участок в районе Old Slip
53. **shiner** (жарг.) сырок под глазом, «фонарь»
54. **the crullers a little soft** (разг.) помяли немного черепную коробку
55. **he would make the shape-up** он отпраивался на пункты по найму рабочей силы
56. **the Gulf** (разг.) Мексиканский залив
57. **license** диплом морского специалиста
58. **to blackball** занести в черный список
59. **Bowditch, Cugles and Dutton's** задачник по навигации (по фам. авторов)

60. **segregated union** обособленный союз для белых или цветных на одном и том же производстве

61. **red tape** волокита, бюрократизм

62. **AFL (American Federation of Labour)** Американская Федерация труда — профсоюзная организация (ША, основанная в 1881 г. АФТ объединяет преимущественно рабочую аристократию и возглавляется продажной кликой реакционных лидеров. В настоящее время руководящая верхушка АФТ неизменно выступает как прямая агента самых оголтелых поджигателей войны.

63. **award** зд.: решение

64. **contracting business** зд.: по малярной части

65. **to make it down to City Hall** зд.: зарегистрировать брак

66. **Queens** миданский район Нью-Йорка

67. **Why don't you shove?** зд.: Что же ты теряешь время?

68. **he made (page.)** устроился на работу

69. **lock, stock and barrel (идиом.)** целиком и полностью

70. **the ports were as tight as drums** зд.: порты полностью контролировались рабочими и ни один шпенокбредер не мог проникнуть в них

71. **goon (жарг.)** гангстер

72. **sitdown strike** т. п. итальянская забастовка, когда рабочие прекращают работу, но не покидают предприятия

## ONE OF THE TWELVE

1. **Grand jury** присяжные, решающие вопрос о предании суду

2. **handlebar** закрученные кнуры

3. **lumberjack** лесоруб

4. **the underdog** униженные и униженные

5. **Bill Haywood** Вильям (Билл) Хэйвуд — руководитель революционного союза горняков, примыкал к ИРМ; впоследствии вступил вместе с революционным меньшинством этой организации в компартию США

6. **Attorney-General Palmer** Пальмер — генеральный прокурор США при Вильсоне, ярый реакционер, организатор первых рейдов на красных в 1919 г.

7. **J. Edgar Hoover** Эдгар Гувер, ныне начальник пресловутой ФБР, тогда еще только начинал свою карьеру политического шантажиста и уголовного афериста

8. **I-pledge-allegiance-with-liberty-and-justice-for-all** слова присяги американскому флагу

9. **signpainter** маляр (здесь — имеется в виду Гитлер)

10. **Hoovervilles** в 1929--1932 гг., когда безработные и полубезработные составляли около половины трудоспособного населения США, страна покрылась бесчисленными городками нищих (особенно около больших городов). Народ иронически прозвал эти скопления нищенских лачуг «гуверовскими городками» по имени президента США Гувера, провозгласившего незадолго до этого эру «нескончаемого» американского процветания» («просперити»)

11. **slumgullion from tin cans** дрянь из консервных банок

12. city hall муниципалитет
13. Teamsters Strike забастовка шоферов грузовых машин
14. deputy badges значки, которые выдаются лицам, содействующим полицией, на время какой-либо операции
15. storm trooper style в стиле гитлеровских штурмовиков
16. the Memorial Day Massacre in Chicago in 1937 зверская расправа с демонстрантами 1937 г. в день памяти павших воинов
17. in conditions of virtual peonage на положении рабов
18. political errand-boys эд.: политические приказчики
19. the men эд.: штрейкбрехеры
20. bail залог
21. Okinawa, Guam, Saipan острова на Тихом океане — военно-морские базы США

## AN AESOPIAN LETTER

1. Gil Green автор этого подлинного письма из тюрьмы на волю, к товарищу, Джильберт Грин — член Национального Комитета Коммунистической партии США; один из осужденных по делу 11 руководителей американской компартии. Сейчас находится в подполье.

2. McGohey Мак-Гохи — прокурор в процессе 11 деятелей Компартии США

3. Masses and Mainstream — американский прогрессивный литературно-публицистический журнал

4. verboten (нем.) запрещено

5. they burst a blood-vessel у них происходит кровоизлияние

6. go batty a la Forrestal «сходят с ума, как Форрестал»

7. faux pas (фр.) ложный шаг; (ирон.) промах

8. three haircuts эд.: три месяца

9. ruled out of evidence (юрид.) отказался принять в качестве доказательства

10. Stuart Chase современный буржуазный «экономист-философ». В упоминаемой Гринном псевдо-научной книге Ст. Чэйза «Тирания слов» автор выступает прогав научного обобщения общественных явлений. Являясь представителем буржуазно-реакционной семантики, Чэйз по понятным причинам объявляет «нереальными» такие термины, как «безработица», «капитализм», «классовая борьба»

11. tycoon (рыц.) магнат; эд.: автомобильный король

12. remand (юрид.) снова взять под стражу

13. the Exclusive West Street Men's Club «Закрытый клуб Мужчин Вест-стрита»

